



THE LOST CITIES OF CEYLON



IN THE RUINED CITY OF ANURADHAPURA
(THUPARAMA IN THE DISTANCE).

Frontispiece.

THE LOST CITIES OF CEYLON



BY G. E. MITTON

AUTHOR OF "ROUND THE WONDERFUL WORLD"
"IN THE GRIP OF THE WILD WA," ETC.

"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

RUBÁIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

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TO

MY SISTER

EVELYN MAYNARD,

WHO SHARED WITH ME THE

JOY AND WONDER INSPIRED BY

THESE MYSTERIOUS RUINS.

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INTRODUCTION

The ruins of Egypt have been known for centuries, but it is only in comparatively recent years the ruins of Ceylon have been unearthed. Since then numbers have been attracted by these strange and beautiful specimens of architecture quite unlike anything found elsewhere. After the final victories of the Tamils, when the Cingalese kings were driven to their last stronghold, Kandy, which lies among the hills in the centre of the island, the jungle growth, so extraordinarily rapid in the moist atmosphere of Ceylon, sprang up in wave upon wave, engulfing in a vast green sea the sites of these ancient capitals. That such cities had existed had long been known, but knowledge of their whereabouts only remained as a tradition.

In the early part of the nineteenth century an Englishman, Lieut. Fagan, came upon some of the ruins, and was immensely struck with them; he wrote an account in *The Ceylon Gazette*, Oct. 1820. The ruins were subsequently visited by one or another of the European officials in Ceylon, notably by Major Skinner on his road-making excursions in 1831, and subsequently. But it was not till 1871 that any steps were really taken to reclaim and preserve them. Then a series of fine photographs of both Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, as they then were, was taken by Mr. Lawton, and official attention to archæology in the island began. Two years later a survey of Anuradhapura

faculty of being able to see it all as it was is merely the stirring of a long-buried experience.

If by means of this book, which has been written with genuine enthusiasm, I send a few people to study for themselves these monuments, or to burrow further in Mr. Bell's exhaustive Reports; if I carry one or two away from a war-worn world into the realms of hitherto unknown history, it is all I ask.

A few explanations are necessary. The Reports so constantly referred to in the body of the book are of course the Ceylon Archæological Survey Reports issued by the Government. All historical quotations enclosed in inverted commas without a reference are from Mr. Turnour's and Mr. Wijesinha's translations of the Mahawansa. The Cingalese words, which seem somehow so much more expressive than the English in certain cases, are here and there used. The first time they are so used they are printed in italics with an interpretation. If any one wants to gain an elementary notion of Tamil or Cingalese, the two languages of the island, he cannot do better than get the little manuals, *Tamil Self-Taught* and *Sinhalese Self-Taught*, by Don M. de Z. Wickremasinghe (Marlborough & Co.).

On page xvi will be found a table giving the dates of the principal kings mentioned in the book. The first column of figures is compiled from the Mahawansa by the simple method of reckoning backwards and adding up the numbers of years and months specified for each king's reign. This is a rough-and-ready way. Recently new light has been thrown on these dates by the

researches of Don M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, who has gathered new data from ancient inscriptions unearthed in Ceylon. By his permission these figures are given in another column. They are in most cases to be accepted as only provisional, though confirmation of their accuracy has been afforded by comparing them with accounts of embassies to Ceylon from China and India in olden days, of which the dates are known, for in these reference is sometimes made to the then reigning king of Ceylon, and in this striking way it has been found possible to prove Mr. Wickremasinghe's deductions.

Of the help received on the spot from all officials, including Dr. Joseph Pearson, D.Sc., Director of the Colombo Museum, Mr. H. C. P. Bell, ex-Archæological Commissioner, and the representatives of the Survey, Muhandiram D. A. L. Perera at Anuradhapura and Mr. Jayasekera at Polonnaruwa, I cannot speak too warmly. The work would have been quite impossible without their cordial co-operation.

I have also to acknowledge with thanks the very prompt permission accorded me by the Colonial Secretary in Ceylon in reply to my request to reproduce plans and two photographs from the Survey Reports, where my own had failed. The two photographs of which I made use in accordance with this permission are duly notified, the rest are my own. I am grateful also for the kindly help of Mr. G. F. Plant, C.C.S., in reading my proofs while at home in England on "leave," which was wholly occupied by work.

G. E. M.

NOTE

PRINCIPAL KINGS MENTIONED

	Turnour.	Wickremasinghe.		Years.
Wijaya	543 B.C.	483 B.C.	reigned	38
Pandukabhaya	437 B.C.	377 B.C.	,,	70
Dewanampia Tissa	307 B.C.	247 B.C.	,,	40
Uttiya	267 B.C.	207 B.C.	,,	10
Elala	205 B.C.	145 B.C.	,,	44
Dutugemunu	161 B.C.	101 B.C.	,,	24
Lajji Tissa	119 B.C.	59 B.C.	,,	9
Walagambahu	104 and	43 and		½
	88 B.C.	28 B.C.	,,	12
Bhatikabhaya	19 B.C.	A.D. 42	,,	28
Gaja Bahu I.	A.D. 113	A.D. 177	,,	12
Maha Sena	A.D. 275	A.D. 308	,,	27

Here ends the Mahawansa, the rest of the kings belong to the Suluwansa.

Dhatu Sena	A.D. 459	A.D. 495	reigned	18
Kasyapa I.	A.D. 477	A.D. 511	,,	18

From this point the dates in the first column are from Wijesinha, the second as before from Wickremasinghe, whose figures in all cases are provisional.

Aggabodhi I.	A.D. 564	A.D. 629	reigned	34
Aggabodhi III.	A.D. 623	A.D. 655	,,	16
Aggabodhi IV.	A.D. 674	A.D. 704	,,	16
Aggabodhi VI.	A.D. 741	A.D. 792	,,	40
Mahinda II..	A.D. 787	A.D. 838	,,	20
Sena I.	A.D. 846	A.D. 897	,,	20
Sena II.	A.D. 866	A.D. 899	,,	35
Udaya I.	A.D. 901	A.D. 952	,,	11
Kasyapa IV.	A.D. 912	A.D. 963	,,	17
Kasyapa V.	A.D. 929	A.D. 980	,,	10
Sena IV.	A.D. 972 *circa*	A.D. 1023	,,	3
Mahinda IV.	A.D. 975	A.D. 1008	,,	16
Mahinda V. .	A.D. 1001	A.D. 1018	,,	36
Wijaya Bahu I.	A.D. 1065	A.D. 1038	,,	72
Wikrama Bahu	A.D. 1121	A.D. 1110	,,	21
Gaja Bahu II.	A.D. 1142	A.D. 1131	,,	22
Parakrama Bahu I.	A.D. 1164	A.D. 1153	,,	33
Wijaya Bahu II. .	A.D. 1197	A.D. 1186	,,	1
Nissanka Malla	A.D. 1198	A.D. 1187	,,	9
Bhuwaneka Bahu	A.D. 1277	A.D.	,,	11
Parakrama Bahu III.	A.D. 1288	A.D. 1288	,,	5
Wimala Dharama (First King of Kandy)	A.D. 1592	A.D.	,,	28
Sri Wickrema Raja Singha (Last King at Kandy)	A.D. 1798	deposed 1815	,,	17

THE LOST CITIES OF CEYLON

CHAPTER I

THE WONDER OF THE PAST

AGAINST the smoky orange-red of the after-glow the monkeys looked like little black demons as they leaped from one tree to another. The weird beat of the tom-toms and the droning chant of worshippers round the sacred bo-tree drew me nearer and nearer to the enclosure till I passed under the hideous plaster-coated entrance " erected 1814 " by some wealthy devotee. It was almost too dark in the courtyard beyond to distinguish the sturdy round stems, offspring of the parent tree, so dense was the screen of their graceful foliage, but flickering wood fires here and there on the bare sand lit up the solemn dark faces of the pilgrims come from far, and showed strange flashes of Eastern colouring in their clothing. The air was heavy with the fragrance of temple-tree flowers, in scent and shape resembling tuber-roses, lying waxen in saucers ready to be offered. High above, up two terraces, guarded and enclosed, grew the oldest historical tree in the world, with an authentic history of over 2,000 years. Since the ages before Christ the tree has been tended,

guarded, and watered, and surrounded with the perfume of adoration and the atmosphere of prayer. It grows at Anuradhapura, the Ancient Royal City of Ceylon. I had little time, when first I saw it nine years ago, to absorb the wonder and mystery, or to search among the carved granite of that city, but ever after I was possessed with the longing to return and penetrate the full measure of its beauty, and at last the chance came.

There is nothing that so draws the heart of educated man as the age-old ruins of a civilisation differing from his own; and when those ruins, like jewels, are set in the gold of records minute in detail, as authentic as anything in history can be, and reaching back into ages before the Christian Era, their fascination is increased ten-fold. The Cingalese possess, in that wonderful book the Mahawansa, or as it is sometimes called after its first author, the Mahanama, chronicles surpassing anything other nations can show. From about 500 B.C. up to the time of the English occupation these historical records run. And the fact that they are history and not sacred writings distinguishes them from a multitude of documents of equal antiquity.

In the fifth century A.D. a priest of the royal house, called Mahanama, set himself the task of recording in orderly sequence the story of his native land by means of gathering his facts from existing records in the vernacular and collating them.

His version carried the tale up to A.D. 301. Hence it was taken on by one pen after another in the same style, each scribe telling in simple

fashion and with marvellous human simplicity of the life lived by king and people when Ceylon was a kingdom and the royal cities were centres of civilisation and learning, though as yet our national ancestry had not been evolved, and "English," "Scottish," and "Irish," much more "American" or "British" (in its modern connotation), were unknown.

The second part of the record is correctly called the Suluwansa, or history of the inferior dynasty (see p. 24), but generally speaking the whole is now referred to under one title.

The first part of these records was made available for English readers by George Turnour, who translated the first thirty chapters, the work of Mahanama, in 1837.

Turnour was in the Ceylon Civil Service, and in 1827 there came into his hands a transcript of a commentary, which enabled him to translate the Pali text of the original Mahawansa. This commentary was also written by Mahanama. Buddhist writers were in the habit of making some such running commentary, as the Pali scripts had to conform to certain rules of metre which did not lend themselves to clearness of sense, so it was a usual custom to write out a liberal translation in this form, otherwise they were often unintelligible. The task was completed many years later by the publication in 1889 of the translation of the remaining chapters by L. C. Wijesinha, Mudaliyar, which carried the history up to the English occupation. There have since been other versions, but in this work references and quotations are from these two books.

The Mahawansa is not the only ancient record of the Cingalese, but it is far the most reliable and continuous, also the most accessible to English readers. Allowing for the legends and supernatural additions which have sprung up around religious events, and discounting the repetitions "with a difference" in the manner of the old nursery fairy-tale, the book, as history, is exceedingly interesting to-day.

Among the hundreds of visitors who yearly go to Ceylon, and the thousands who stop a day in port on their way to "somewhere or other" by one of the great liners, it is safe to say that, while all know of Kandy and the hill-resort of Nuwara Eliya, there are comparatively few who have heard anything at all about the far greater attractions of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Sigiriya, the three most famous of the royal cities of old Ceylon.

Only yesterday a man, whose bent inclined him to interest in old things, said casually in my hearing, "I shan't stop in Ceylon, nothing to see there," and was amazed to learn what there was to see.

It is worth while going out East to visit the Ceylon ruins alone, and specially to see the exquisitely carved moonstones; these have nothing to do with the jewels usually associated with the island, but are semi-circular granite stones of a kind peculiarly associated with Ceylon. A few examples of semi-circular stones in a comparatively plain style have been found in South India outside temple entrances, but they have little in common with the richly carved specimens in

Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. The carving on the stones in these cities is as fresh as the day it was done, and is alive with the spirit of the artist whose hand fashioned the lifelike elephants and bullocks, the strange horses, and still stranger lions, which run incessantly after one another in a race beginning some 2,000 years ago and stretching to infinity.

Egypt has attracted its tens of thousands, and of the books that have been written about it there is no end, but mysterious and awe-inspiring as are the mighty monuments and temples of Egypt, they lack the individuality, the varying touches, the humanness of these works of Ceylon, where one is perpetually reminded by a thousand inimitable touches that all is handicraft and not machine-made.

The Cingalese have a tradition of a great king who was the son of a lion, the word *Sinha* in their language, hence their national name is more correctly spelt Sinhalese, but the anglicised form, being more familiar to English-speaking readers, is adopted in this book. This "Sinha" had a grandson, Wijaya,[1] from whom the real roll of the kings of Lanka—the ancient name for the island—begins.

Wijaya came over from India on a raiding expedition and established himself in the island some five and a half centuries before Christ (543 B.C.). The original inhabitants of the island found by him on his advent are somewhat con-

[1] Spelt also variously Wejaya or Vijaya.

temptuously spoken of in the records as "Yakkho" or "Yakkha"—demons.

Mr. Still in his admirable little book[1] says, "It is a pity the Yakkhos are silent. They never produced a book, an inscription, a coin, or a permanent building."

The crowds of followers who came over with Wijaya must have intermarried with these aborigines, for they soon ceased to have an independent existence, and reference to them stops. It may be that the few Veddahs who live in the deepest jungles to the present day are a remnant of them.

The next outstanding name among Cingalese kings is that of Tissa, or Dewanampiatissa, the "Beloved of the Gods" as he came to be called. He reigned forty years from 307 B.C., and it was in his reign that the most important event in the whole of Cingalese history happened, for Mahinda, the pious son of the great King Asoka of India—the monarch to whom all Indian Buddhists look as their greatest ruler—came over on a mission to convert the Cingalese.

In this he was eminently successful, not only was the king converted, but his followers embraced the new religion wholesale, as the Kentish men embraced Christianity after the example of King Ethelbert, and ever since Ceylon has been a Buddhist stronghold.

Buddhists cherish legends of the appearance of no less than twenty-four Buddhas before that of the present era, who is generally meant when the title is used. He, the only historical example,

[1] *Guide to the Ancient Capitals of Ceylon.* (Cave & Co., Ceylon, 1907.)

is, they say, the fourth of this *kalpa*, or section of time, in which there is still one to appear.

For a considerable time doubt was thrown by the non-Buddhist world on the actual existence of Gautama, the latest Buddha, as the date of his birth was doubtful. Even when this was admitted, he was, for many years, supposed to be of an age considerably further back in time than has since been conjectured. Professor Rhys Davids, in his article on the subject in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says :

"The date [of Buddha's death] derived from Ceylon, which is usually assigned to that event, is 543 B.C. But those scholars who have devoted most attention to the point hold this calculation to contain a certain error of about sixty years, and a probable error of about eighty to a hundred more, so that the date for the death of Buddha would have to be brought forward to 400 B.C. or a few years later."

As it is known that Buddha lived to eighty-one years of age, this puts his birth somewhere about 480 B.C. Yet this is not final. The researches of Sir M. Aurel Stein and others are yearly bringing out fresh evidence on which to form an opinion. By independent calculations also, based on the evidence of inscriptions, Don M. de Z. Wickremasinghe[1] makes the death of Buddha 483 B.C., therefore his birth 564 B.C. But there is not yet finality on this question. Gautama was born in what is now known as the borders of Nepal, at Kapilavastu. His people

[1] *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. i. p. 156.

were called Shakyans and belonged to the warrior or Kshatriya caste.

In spite of the fact that the Mahawansa describes the visits of Gautama, and the three preceding Buddhas, to Ceylon, there seems to be not the slightest historical evidence for such events, and though the course of his life is fairly well known, there is nothing in it which confirms the idea of this visit. When the chroniclers of Ceylon are dealing with facts which came within their own cognisance they have often been proved to be remarkably accurate, if the few natural flourishes to embellish and aggrandise their kings are allowed for; but when writing purely from imagination, it is evident that their possession of that quality was not despicable.

The continuance of any tradition rests more upon the will to believe than is commonly supposed, and annually thousands of Buddhists still gaze in awe and reverence on the monstrous five-foot impression on Adam's Peak, supposed to have been there imprinted by Gautama on the last of his three visits to the island; while the other foot rested in the centre of Anuradhapura, on the spot where the most sacred of the dagabas, Ruanweli, now stands. How this remarkable feat was accomplished needs no explaining to the faithful. The print on Adam's Peak bears the sign of the sacred lotus, which emblem is invariably to be seen sculped on the soles of prostrate images of Buddha.

As the whole life of the people of Ceylon is bound up with their religion, and their ancient monuments are overwhelmingly of the religious rather

than of the civil life, it is necessary to give a very brief sketch of what this religion means to its votaries.

Gautama, who began life in luxury as the son of a raja, received "revelation" which enlightened him as to the riddle of life.

"Sitting one night under the tree, which henceforth was called the Buddha-tree, he arrived at perfect insight into the nature and cause of sorrow, and the way of destroying it. He was then Buddha, the Buddha of the age. He had attained, unaided, and by direct insight and conscious realisation, the saving truth for the benefit of gods and men." [1]

For seven times seven days he sat thus, part of the time sheltered from storms and rain by the hood of a cobra, who watched over him tenderly.

Hence the origin of the many-headed cobras so constantly found in Buddhistic sculpture. Possibly this touch and that of the "Bodhi-tree" were later additions designed to attract and bring into the fold the remnant of those who followed "Tree and Serpent worship," for a characteristic of early Buddhism was a vast catholicity. In its origin at all events it claimed to spring from Hinduism, and to embrace and develop the spiritual side of that religion, and, entirely different as it is from Hinduism at the present day, many educated Brahmins still hold this idea. It is certain, in any case, that many very ancient beliefs were incorporated into the new religion, such as that of transmigration.

The summary of Buddha's reflections as to

[1] *Buddhism in Ceylon*, by Bishop Copleston, 2nd ed. 1908.

conduct is embodied in what is called the Eightfold Path, which (as interpreted by Professor Rhys Davids) is: "Right views, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right rapture."

The gist of his ideas upon life was apparently, that all misery comes from individuality.

"Birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful, union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving unsatisfied, that too is painful."[1]

Therefore if you get rid of this craving you get rid of the individuality, and attain the bliss of nothingness—the Nirvana or Neh'ban, which has been so frequently supposed to be a state of individual happiness in another world. Buddha's teaching is not so.

To rid oneself of suffering is the object, not to attain joy. What is the suffering caused by? The clinging to objects on earth. Therefore if one cuts oneself off from all environment the suffering must cease. But this desirable end cannot be attained all at once. For instance, no layman living a normal human life can attain to it, but he can earn progression toward a higher existence in a succeeding life, and eventually win it. To destroy the clinging threads is the work of more than one life-time. It can be begun by purity of conduct, self-control in regard to the sins of the flesh, and this enables the subject to

[1] *Early Buddhism.* (Constable. 1914.)

meditate in utter self-forgetfulness of the world around until he finally gains insight.

The revelation which came to Buddha was that he himself was an *Arahat*, that is to say, he had passed through many previous existences and attained to that entire absence of "clinging," which carried with it Nirvana. He had no threads, no "suckers" attaching him to life. But instead of instantly resigning himself into a state of passionless non-existence as he was able, he chose to remain on earth and fulfil the span of man's life and pass on to others that vision which he had inwardly seen.

As was natural, an enormous accretion of teachings and legends sprang up after his death, encrusting and enlarging upon his own comparatively few and simple words.

In fact, believing Buddhists now know what, whether he knew it or not, he never revealed in his lifetime—namely, the whole of his 500 previous existences in the flesh. These are embodied in the *Jatakas*, a series of folk-lore tales, woven with the Buddha as principal actor in animal or human form. These form a favourite subject for paintings, and were gloriously painted, almost at full length, on the walls of one of the temples of Ceylon, "Demala-maha-seya," where, alas, wet and weather have not left much (see p. 233).

It will be seen that the necessity for passing onward from one life to another, as the individual climbs the Ladder of Existence, presupposes transmigration, an idea so deeply embedded in the human mind that it may almost be said to be natural to man. Its hold lies in the explanation

it apparently offers of the inconsistency and injustice of human fate as meted out to ourselves or those around us. If we are paying for what we earned in some previous though unremembered existence, we cannot prate of injustice. This doctrine, however, as expounded in the original Buddhist creed, is not the same as glibly quoted by people of the Western world. They apparently imagine that the soul or entity passes entire into a new body which happens to be there, and that somewhere, after the summit of perfection has been reached, the individual, who, even now, has glimpses of previous existences, will be able to look back over the whole sequence. Some sort of a heaven, or spiritual, and still individual, existence is usually postulated as the crown of endeavour.

Now Buddha admitted no soul, and in his belief individuality was the beginning and end of suffering; no heaven was to be the reward of effort—only extinction.

Professor Rhys Davids points this out emphatically.

"In the popular belief, followed also in the Brahmin theology, the bridge between the two lives was a minute and subtle entity called the soul, which left the one body at death and entered into the new body. The new body happened to be there, ready, with no soul in it. The soul did not make the body. In the Buddhist adaptation of this theory, no soul, no consciousness, no memory, goes over from one body to the other. It is the grasping, the craving, still existing at the death of one body that causes the new set of

skandhas, that is, the new body, with its mental tendencies and capacities, to arise. How this takes place is nowhere explained."

It is therefore merely the clinging to life which passes on in the present world, gathering to itself a body in which to clothe itself, and carry on the contact with that material environment for which it craves. The craving ensures continued contact, and final severance from all material things is only ensured when the last "feeler" is atrophied and there is no adherence of any kind to this world left in what, for want of words, must be described as the entity.

In the Buddhist creed the resumption of life may be in the form of an animal instead of a human being.

"Those who do not keep a guard over their passions, who are abusive, and who refrain from giving alms, will fall into the Bohng of animals. Just as one man by reason of previous merits is born a prince, while another barely scrapes into human existence as an outcast pagoda slave, a grave-digger, a leper, or a heretic, so there are grades in the state of animals. To be an elephant is, of course, nearly as good as being a man; to be a white elephant is usually very much better. . . . The vulture is highly honoured because it never takes life but lives entirely on carrion." [1]

Sir George Scott's version of the Buddhist Ten Commandments is:

"Not to take any kind of life, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, not to drink in-

[1] *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, by Shway Yoe (Sir J. George Scott). (Macmillan. 1896.)

toxicating liquor. Also, not to eat after midday, not to sing, dance, or play on any musical instrument, not to use cosmetics, not to sit, stand, or sleep on platforms or elevated places improper for one's position, not to touch gold or silver."

The first five are incumbent on all Buddhists, the second five only on the monks, but the laity are expected to observe them on sacred days.

Sir George Scott is writing of Burma, but the Buddhism of Burma and Ceylon is very closely akin, both being rooted in the Siamese school. For in 1750 King Kirti Sri brought over to the island twenty Siamese monks to revive the national religion, and with very few exceptions the island Buddhists follow their teaching. The monks wear the yellow robe with the right shoulder uncovered. To this fraternity belong the shrines of Kandy, Anuradhapura, Adam's Peak, Kelani, and Tissamaharama.

Though more properly described as "monks" than priests, because ministerial duties do not enter into their vocation, yet these men do give discourses and read aloud the Buddhist sacred books to those who visit the shrines. The gramophone is now even adopted in some places so that these discourses may be repeated and preserved. To visit the shrines and make offerings is a very constant duty of the Buddhist laity, and the precepts of cleanliness, dislike of taking animal life, and charity may be very clearly observed in their daily lives.

It seems extraordinary that so apparently negative and colourless a creed should have spread and satisfied millions of people, and should have

flourished through the ages. It offers so little by way of inducement and dwells more on the vices than the virtues of human nature.

In Buddhism there can be no such thing as thankfulness for the boon of life, no recognition of a virile youthful joy in life itself wholly innocent and pure; still less of that most poignant joy found in closest juxtaposition with sorrow.

Yet on the other side it may be said, that the purest source of all joy, loving-kindness in its widest sense, is not only not barred out, but insisted on. "Let him (the disciple) cultivate toward the whole world—above, below, around—a heart of love unstinted, unmixed with the sense of differing or opposing interests. Let a man maintain this mindfulness all the while he is awake, whether he be standing, walking, sitting, or lying down." . . . "Our mind shall not waver. No evil speech will we utter. Tender and compassionate will we abide, loving in heart, void of malice within. And we will be ever suffusing such a one with the rays of our loving thought." [1]

No ideal could be more beautiful, and the mind of an Arahat, who could attain to the fulfilment of it, would doubtless find in itself a heaven on earth, which was all that the great teacher intended.

Buddha was no believer in unnecessary self-mortification; it was the discovery of the barrenness of this mode of overcoming the body which caused his very earliest disciples to break away from him only to return to him later. His view was to get rid of the body altogether in regard to

[1] *Early Buddhism* (Ibid.).

any hold it had, not to emphasise its importance by increasing the evil thing, suffering.

It is true that in Buddhist practice the way is to be made easier to the monks by the removal of all but the minimum of possessions necessary for life and cleanliness, thus lessening objects of desire, but this is far from inflicted penance.

Great stress in the creed is laid on the attainment of knowledge, but this knowledge is quite different from the Christian wisdom, which may be interpreted as the ability to take a true view of things, to look at life in its real proportion, which, if it were fully attained, would necessitate the cessation of sin.

It is also quite apart from the earthly knowledge defined as science. Buddhist knowledge means knowledge of self, and how to get rid of that self, to rid oneself of all that is included in "I am."

The disciple must learn the Four Noble Truths. First, that sorrow is universal; second, that desire is the cause of sorrow; third, that cessation of sorrow can only be attained by eradication of desire; fourth, that the truth shows the eightfold way of living.

It seems incredible that the ordinary people worshipping at the temples, carrying with them their fragrant offerings of flowers, or burning their little candles, should have grasped even the faintest notion of their teacher's meaning, for much of it is high philosophy. Probably the secret of the success of Buddhism is that they do not grasp it and never attempt to do so. They regulate their conduct, more or less, by the ex-

cellent rules of practical application set before them. They believe that if they abstain from taking life, keep themselves clean, visit the shrines, speak truth and are kind to their neighbours, they are all right, and most of them probe no deeper.

There is no idolatry in Buddhism; the images of the master constantly set up in sacred shrines are not intended to be worshipped, but merely to remind the devotees of the sage. Yet undoubtedly, as is the case with all uneducated peoples, the tangible material object in some sense seems to them to imbibe and to emanate the power and holiness of the object represented; still more is this the case with those sacred relics, which, they firmly believe, were a part of Buddha's own body, or used by him. And they attribute to those relics miraculous power which was never claimed by Gautama himself when alive.

A curious problem seems to be that a religion made up for the most part of such gloomy tenets, and at the best so negative in its prospects, should inspire its followers with such everyday cheerfulness. No one who knows nations which are overwhelmingly Buddhist, in contrast with others, which are not, can class Buddhism among gloomy beliefs. The Burmese, with whom Buddhism is the predominant faith, are notoriously cheerful. It may be contended that this is due to a pre-Buddhistic temperament, but we have no means of proving it one way or the other. It is true, their Buddhism is tinged with *nat* or spirit-worship, and the means taken to placate the unfriendly nats (the friendly ones wouldn't hurt

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you anyhow, so they may be disregarded) enter largely into the life of the people, so their Buddhism is not pure. In Ceylon too there is a horror of demons and evil spirits, and the solitudes of the jungles are supposed to be infested by them, especially after dark. But this hardly affects the question, as, if Buddhism were really a gloomy influence, it would make itself felt anyhow, reinforcing these intermingled beliefs.

Of all the Buddhist shrines remaining in Ceylon, with the possible exception of Adam's Peak, Anuradhapura attracts the most devotees. It is essentially a sacred as well as a royal city.

Its foundation indeed had taken place before the introduction of Buddhism into the island, but it was there, subsequently, that the most sacred relics were enshrined, the greatest monuments of piety erected, and, above all, the sacred bo-tree planted. The city was the capital of the kingdom for more than eleven centuries of varying fortunes, with one small exception, so it is amazing to consider that many English-speaking people to whom Persepolis, Karnac, and Babylon are household names, have never even heard of it.

The Mahawansa records the length of each king's reign, hence by working backwards a chronological table of dates has been compiled. There are, however, a few discrepancies and some ambiguities, so there is room for divergence of opinion, and the later part of the table of kings given by Turnour in his version of the Mahawansa does not altogether accord with that compiled by Wijesinha. Don Martino de Z. Wickremasinghe,

working on evidence deduced from the inscriptions found in Ceylon, has yet another chronology which in most cases differs from either of these. In this book Turnour is followed, as far as he goes historically in his text, and after that the dates given by Wijesinha are preferred, as the kings can be identified in the accounts he gives of them, and as most of the Cingalese kings had two or more names, this is an important matter. A table of the principal kings mentioned, giving also Don Wickremasinghe's version, will be found on p. xvi. King Tissa, as has been said, reigned for forty years, and the roll of his pious deeds is long. Among meritorious works, that of the making of great reservoirs of water, which served to supply the land by means of canals, was counted high. These tanks, as they are called, in many cases exist to-day though dwindled in extent, and they have been restored by the English Government. The word "tank" is a misnomer; they resemble beautiful lakes, and form one of the most attractive features in a lovely country.

All through the history of Ceylon we hear of raids of the Tamils ("damilos," as the Mahawansa calls them), who descended in hordes from southern India upon the little island, just as the Danes and Northmen did upon England, harrying and destroying, being driven off and conquering alternately. It was not only the Cholyans, but other races of south India, such as the Pandyans, who swarmed over to seek spoil and carry off loot. Fergusson, in his *History of Indian Architecture,* describes the Pandyan kingdom as occupying the extreme south of the Indian Penin-

sula, while the Cholyan kingdom was north of it and extended into Mysore. One of their capitals was Uraiyur, now a suburb of Trichinopoly, and, later on what is now Conjivaram, while Madura was for a long time the capital of the Pandyans. These two states were constantly at war with one another and were equally bitter foes to Ceylon. They were both Tamil-speaking and may equally be meant under the word "damilo," which appears so frequently in the chronicles. The first recorded regular invasion was that of one Elala (or Elaro) a Cholyan, who, with an army from Mysore, arrived with force and succeeded in establishing himself as King of Lanka (205 B.C.). For forty-four years he reigned and reigned well. Though he did not become a Buddhist, he was liberal minded as regards the national religion, upheld the monks, continued many useful works, such as the building of tanks, and kept the people together with a strong hand. As an instance of his justness, the Mahawansa says that at the head of his bed was a bell, with a long rope, ready to be rung by those who sought redress. Elala's son, when on an excursion to the Tissa tank in his chariot, ran over a full-grown calf, which was on the road with its mother. The cow immediately went to the bell-rope and pulled it by throwing herself against it. On hearing the story the king struck off the head of his son with the same wheel that had passed over the calf's neck! There are many other similar stories.

The great river, the Mahawelliganga, has always formed a barrier across which it was difficult to penetrate, and the power of Elala did not

reach to the further side, where lay the hill country of Rohuna, difficult to subdue, and forming at all times a refuge for the lawless or fugitive from the northern side.

Here were established some remaining members of the royal line of Wijaya, living in petty state, and fretting at their exile from power. Among them was one boy, subsequently called Dutugemunu, but as a boy Gemunu or Gamini, and his brother Tissa, two years his junior. These two were great-grandsons of King Tissa (Dewananpiatissa). When only a lad of twelve, Gemunu flung himself down on a bed with his hands and feet curled up. His mother asked him why he did not stretch himself out comfortably, to which he replied: "Confined by the damilos beyond the river (Mahawelliganga) and on the other side by the unyielding ocean, how can I, in so confined a space, lie down with outstretched limbs?" This was taken as an omen that some time when he attained man's estate he would oust the usurper Elala, and recover the throne of his forefathers.

The father of the princes was of a peaceful or timid disposition, and tried to exact promises from the lads that they would never attempt to recover their inheritance from the Tamils. But both of them were of different metal, and stoutly refused any such pledge. On the contrary, Gemunu discovered ten strong men, heroes in prowess, and attached them to himself, causing them each to enlist ten more, as like themselves as might be. These picked warriors became an army under the command of the boy, who thereupon applied to his father for permission to cross

the river and make war upon the invaders. Thrice he made the request and thrice it was refused, whereupon, in an outburst of contemptuous anger, he sent a female jewel to his father, indicating that he held him only fit for women's baubles. This impertinence was promptly resented, and Gemunu had to fly to the mountains near Adam's Peak to save himself from his parent's wrath. For the escapade he gained the additional name of Duttha, or Dutu, meaning " rebellious." While he was away his father died, whereupon Tissa, the younger brother, seized what power there was, and established himself in his father's place. It was hardly likely Dutugemunu would stand this! Back he came and made war on his brother, forcing both him and his mother to fly. But they were persuaded to return, and Dutugemunu, emerging victorious, forgave them both magnanimously and enlisted them on his side.

Having thus strengthened himself, Dutugemunu proceeded to carry out the desire of his life. He very sensibly set himself first to the task of reducing the strongholds in the keeping of Elala's principal warriors. The town Wijito was besieged. It was protected by three lines of lofty battlements and an iron gate. The Tamils who were defending it poured down lumps of iron and molten lead on the attackers. Some of this stuff fell on the back of the state elephant Kandulo, who was being employed as a battering-ram. He rushed into the water in his agony, but, having been protected by a leathern covering of " well-softened buffalo hide sevenfold thick, and an oiled skin," he pluckily returned to the fray

and burst in the gate. It took the warrior four months to demolish the fortifications of Wijito, and another four months to overcome Mahelo. Then he started out for Anuradhapura. Elala was quite ready for him, having heard of the fate of his outposts, and came out to meet him.

Dutugemunu gave command that no one but himself was to attack Elala, and, mounting on the faithful Kandulo, he approached the southern gate of the city. Elala accepted his challenge and met him there, beginning by hurling his spear at this audacious youth. Gemunu evaded it, and made his elephant charge with his tusks the other elephant, and at the same time hurled his javelin at Elala, so that both rider and mount were slain.

This Homeric combat took place 161 B.C., and the details are full of vivid actuality. We can stand near the spot where the mighty joust was played and conjure up the scene. Wonderful to say, Dutugemunu was not deficient in chivalry. He called together the foe, who had submitted on the death of their leader, and held a festival in honour of the dead king.

The corpse was burnt at a funeral pile on the spot where the king fell, a tomb was built over it, and Dutugemunu ordained that it should receive honour, as the Mahawansa says: "Even unto this day, the monarchs who have succeeded to the kingdom of Lanka, on reaching that quarter of the city, whatever the procession may be, they silence their musical band."

And these honours continued to be paid to the

tomb of Elala up to the period of the British occupation. As late as 1818, when the Kandyan chief, Pilamé Talawé, the second of that name, was escaping, after having unsuccessfully organised a revolt against the British, he got down from his litter on approaching the spot and walked for a long way, though weary and ill, until he was quite sure he had passed the precincts, for he was not certain of the exact situation of the tomb. Dutugemunu reigned twenty-four years, and was succeeded by his brother Tissa, for his only son had married a low-caste (Chandala) woman and renounced the succession.

The line of Cingalese sovereigns is divided into two distinct classes: the kings of the Mahawansa, or superior dynasty, which includes all the names up to that of Maha Sena (A.D. 275–302), and the Sula-wansa, or inferior race, who followed, and held the throne down to the occupation of the island by Europeans. But this division is not a question of blood or race, for the king who succeeded Maha Sena was his own son, Kitsiri Maiwan, who, with many of an altogether different race, is included in the Sula-wansa. The distinction is rather one of power.

There were numerous deeds of violence and murder, numerous usurpations. The kings succeeding Tissa seem to have had as their chief occupations, keeping down the quick growth of jungle, repelling Tamils, and rebuilding shrines and repairing tanks after their incursions. The second great recorded invasion of Tamils was that in 104 B.C., which drove Walagambahu I, or Watagemunu, to Dambulla caves, and the third

that in 110 B.C., when thousands of Cingalese were carried away captive. Maha Sena, mentioned above, was an "apostate king" who encouraged heretic sects to the discomfiture of the monks of the Maha Vihara, who had held their position unchallenged from the time of Tissa. Turnour's version of the Mahawansa includes and goes beyond Maha Sena, telling the tale of the kings up to Kasyapa I, the tenth Cingalese king of the Suluwansa. But in the time of the eighth king of this class, Mitta Sena (A.D. 433), the Tamils acquired such ascendancy that they actually reigned for five and twenty years. Then Dhatu Sena (A.D. 459) succeeded in freeing the land from them, and held the sovereignty for the next quarter of a century.

He was a good king, but came to a most unhappy end. He had a daughter, whom he loved dearly, and gave in marriage to his nephew, who was also his chief general. This man flogged her "on her thighs with a whip," and the king, furiously angry, caused the nephew's mother, presumably his own sister, to be burnt. The nephew made common cause with the king's son, Kasyapa, and rose against him. Another and older son, Moggallana, thereupon fled for safety, leaving his father a prisoner.

The nephew, desirous of revenge, suggested to his cousin Kasyapa that the old king was concealing treasure in order that he might give it to Moggallana. Therefore again and again Kasyapa sent demanding of his father to tell him where the treasures were concealed. The old king was longing to bathe once more in Kalawapi tank

(called by the Cingalese Kala-Wewa), which he had made, and he thought that by means of a ruse he might accomplish his desire and see his friend the *thero*, or monk, there, so at last he replied to his son, "If ye will take me to the Kalawapi tank, I shall be able to tell where the treasures are," and so he was allowed to go. The thero met him with pleasure, making a meal of "grain mixed with meat," or, as Wijesinha has it, "a rich meal of beans with the flesh of water-fowl" for him, and sat and talked to him, and when it was finished the old king went down to the tank, "diving into and bathing delightedly in it," and when he had finished he said quietly to Kasyapa's guards, who stood impatiently awaiting him, "Oh, friends, this is all the treasure that I possess." They hurried him back to Anuradhapura and told the story to the usurping king, who, furious at being thus deluded, seized his father and threw him into a cell.

The general (his nephew) clothed himself in his richest garments and walked up and down before the poor captive king, who weakly tried to conciliate him, but he would have none of it. Then he stripped the king naked, and bound him with chains inside the wall (of his prison) with his face to the east, and caused it to be "plastered up with clay."

But we are told that the king's terrible end was only justice, for, when many years before, in the days of his prosperity, he was building the great tank, he saw a priest sitting there meditating, and in his impatience he could not wait until the man recovered from his absorption, but

ordered earth to be heaped over him, and had him buried alive!

The wretch Kasyapa knew no peace, for he was frightened of the vengeance of his brother, and, having failed to kill him by sending his groom and cook for that purpose, he himself fled to the strong rock of Sigiri. "He cleared it round about, and surrounded it by a rampart and built galleries in it (ornamented) with figures of lions, wherefore it took its name of Sihagiri (the lion's rock)," and he built a palace there. We shall meet Kasyapa again.

In the middle of the ninth century A.D. there was a great Tamil invasion by the king of Pandy (Madura), and though one of the Cingalese princes made a valiant stand at Abhayagiri vihara (or temple) single-handed, he had to fly at last. Then the Pandyan king took all the valuables of Anuradhapura, including the jewels in the king's palace, the golden image set up in it, the jewelled eyes of another statue, the golden coverings of Thuparama, and the golden images in the different viharas, and laid waste the "beautiful city."

After this time the place now called Polonnaruwa became the real capital, though it never attained the sacredness of Anuradhapura, and the king (Sena I) returned again to the wasted city when the Tamils had withdrawn.

Polonnaruwa is quite a modern name and is never mentioned in the Mahawansa. There the town is referred to as Pulatthi and another ancient name is Pulastipura.

The relations of the Pandyans with the Cinga-

lese after this are much mixed, because we find the king's successor and grandson Sena II (date[1] A.D. 866 as given by Wijesinha) going to India to help a prince of Pandy who had quarrelled with his father, and the combined forces penetrated to the capital and even recovered many of the things which had been previously carried away from Ceylon.

At last, in the reign of Mahinda V (A.D. 1001), disaster overwhelmed the Cingalese. The kings had been in the habit of maintaining armies of Malabars as mercenaries, but this king, being a mild man, did not enforce the collection of revenue, and had no money to pay them, so they revolted, and he fled by a secret passage (he was at that time at Anuradhapura) and escaped to Rohuna. So the invaders had everything their own way; and, hearing how it was, more enemies came over from India and took all the spoil from the relic houses of Anuradhapura, and "like unto demons who suck up blood, they took to themselves all the substance that was also therein," and they carried the king himself away captive.

Wijaya Bahu I, grandson of Mahinda, ascended 1065 (almost the date of our own William the Conqueror); he reigned for seventeen years in Rohuna, holding together the remnant of his people, and then he attacked Polonnaruwa still held by the Tamils. The Tamils sallied forth, but were driven back into the city, whereupon they shut the gates and manned the walls; but after six weeks they had

[1] From this point the dates in the text are taken from Wijesinha's version as Turnour's text goes no further than Kasyapa I.

to give in, and the king became lord of the throne of his ancestors and went up to be crowned at Anuradhapura, but he lived at Polonnaruwa.

He built round Polonnaruwa "a strong wall of great height, and ornamented it with plaster-work, and protected it with towers built thereon, and with a deep moat round about it of great length and breadth, so that the enemy could not easily break through it."

Wijaya Bahu reigned for fifty-five years, he was a great poet among other things, and his good deeds were notorious; even "to well-born women that were helpless by becoming widows he gave land and food and raiment according to their necessities." His brother succeeded him, reigning only one year, and then came his son, Wikrama Bahu (A.D. 1121), who was an unfaithful king, and gave away the precious relics to his followers, and apparently also to buy off insurrectionists, so the priests took the sacred Tooth-relic and Alms-bowl relic while they were safe and fled to Rohuna with them. The king managed, however, to retain his throne for twenty-one years and handed it on to his son, Gaja Bahu II (A.D. 1142), who reigned twenty-two years, but was defeated and succeeded by the great hero Parakrama Bahu, who ascended in 1164 (according to Wickremasinghe, 1153). He was the son of Princess Ratanavali, daughter of Wijaya Bahu I, of whom he was therefore a grandson. Parakrama's life is interwoven with Polonnaruwa, and most of the existing buildings there owe their origin to him, so his story, which reads like that of one of the old Greek heroes, will be told in connection

with that city. Parakrama was succeeded by weak and bad rulers, who failed to defend Polonnaruwa against the invaders, and in 1592 Kandy became the capital.

Europeans had begun to make themselves felt in the island, first the Portuguese and then the Dutch, appearing and pushing ever inwards to the seat of government in the hills. It was the hills that saved the native race then as before, for when the white-faced invaders appeared at Kandy, they found the precious Tooth-relic and other valuables had been carried away into inaccessible fastnesses.

Both races eventually had to give way before the British, who about the end of the eighteenth century established themselves on the sea-coast. After a long period of desultory fighting, and, it must be noted, some terrible blundering, the last king, Sri Wickrema Raja Singha, was deposed in 1814 and the island definitely became a British possession.

The later Kandyan kings were selfish despots of a mediæval type, who ruthlessly exploited their own subjects. By far the best account of the island during their régime is to be found in a book[1] written by Robert Knox, who was a prisoner in the island for nineteen years from 1660. Knox was a sailor, and as a young man of nineteen was taken prisoner by the Cingalese, with his father and fourteen of their men, when they landed near Trincomalee, having put in to repair their ship. The king treated them with

[1] *Ceylon*. (MacLehose. New edition 1911. First published 1681.)

perfect humanity and quartered them on various members of the community. He commanded his subjects to find them food, but made no allowance for clothes. After about two years the captain, who shared a hut with his son, died, and for no less than nineteen and a half years the rest remained prisoners. The remarkable part of the story is, that the king, who was in other ways an unmitigated scoundrel, never ill-treated these helpless captives, though he was extraordinarily careful in not allowing them to escape. He was very suspicious of the written word, thinking that plans of escape might be made thereby.

On one occasion one of the English sailors had received a letter from a Portuguese, also a prisoner, and took it to a native to get it translated; this was discovered, and all three were condemned to death, and, according to the ghastly custom prevalent, were torn limb from limb by elephants.

The prisoners, after a while, were put to great shifts for clothing. So they started knitting caps to exchange them for garments, and did quite a brisk trade.

Stephen Rutland was the only other man, besides Knox, who had kept himself free from entanglements with native women, and the two lived together. They succeeded at last in getting quite a decent house and did a good deal of trading in grain and other things.

The king was absolutely autocratic; he would be waited on only by all the best looking youths in his kingdom, and messengers were sent round to collect them every now and again. These unfortunate youths never lived long. They were

invariably executed as the reward of their service. The parents knew quite well what service at court meant, and mourned their son as dead already when he was summoned, but dared not resist, for those who resisted the royal will were impaled or torn to pieces, or if women were flung into the river.

As Knox says, these youths went " like an ox to the slaughter, only with far more heavy hearts." Yet he is careful to explain there was no question of improper behaviour by the king in regard to them.

After the wretched youths were killed or handed over as slaves to some one—and one of these two fates none of them escaped—then their father's property was seized. The only good the parents got out of it was that while the boy was actually at court they were free from taxation, a dearly-bought and short-lived privilege.

The soldiers were not paid or even provided with food. Once during Knox's time there was a rebellion and the king fled to the hills, those who had engineered it not having the nerve to seize him before he was aware of it. His only child, a lad of fifteen, kept in close confinement by his father's orders, was brought out and set on the throne, but his aunt ran away with him to the king and the rebellion collapsed.

Knox says that the king himself shortly afterwards poisoned the boy to prevent the possible recurrence of such a plot, but this is not borne out by historical records.

He tells a story showing how unsafe were the heads of the royal *entourage* on their shoulders.

The king, while bathing in a pond, pretended to be drowning to see what his subjects would do. Two of them sprang in and rescued him. They were afterwards sent for—and executed! The pretext being they had presumed to lay hands on the king's sacred body! But in fact, presumably, because he could not bear the existence of anyone to whom he was under an obligation.

As year by year went by, Rutland and Knox planned their escape. They used to travel about and sell goods, extending their wanderings further and further north to gain familiarity with the country. The difficulty was the want of water. For beyond the zone of the rivers they were reduced to drinking from muddy pools fouled by animals, which gave them violent gripes. Besides this, at the limits of the king's territory, on all main tracks (and it was almost impossible to break through the jungle otherwise) were guards. At length, in October 1679, the pair managed to get as far as Anuradhapura, which Knox calls Anarodgburro, which was very near the limits of the king's territory.

"To Anarodgburro therefore we came, called also Neur Waug. Which is not so much a particular single Town as a territory. It is a vast green plain, the like I never saw in all the island, in the midst whereof is a lake, which may be a mile over, not natural, but made by Art, as other Ponds in the Country to serve them to water their corn grounds. This Plain is encompassed round with Woods, and small Towns among them on every side, inhabitated by Malabars, a distinct people from the Chingulays."



The comrades were brought before the governor, who required a good deal of talking before he was convinced that they were what they professed to be, namely prisoners allowed to go about trading (though they certainly would not have been allowed to wander to such a distance, had the king known it!). Finding it impossible, after reconnoitring, to get through the watch, stationed four or five miles out from the town, they turned back to the previous place they had come through, Colliwilla, whose governor they had satisfied by saying they were going off in search of deer's meat, promising to come back with it. But instead of going to Colliwilla they turned off about half-way, down a little stream Malwat Oya they had noticed, which they concluded must somehow find its way to the sea.

They had a terrible time on their way down to the coast. They were torn and lacerated with thorns, in constant terror of being caught and sent back to Kandy by the inhabitants, whose voices they often heard quite distinctly in the jungle. They were in alarm at wild elephants, which abounded, and they were armed only with knives fastened to long stakes. They carried also:

"Rice, flesh, fish, pepper, salt, a basin to boil our victuals in; two Calabasses to fetch water; two great Talipats (leaves of the Talipot palm) for tents, big enough to sleep under if it should rain, Jaggery (a kind of brown sugar), and sweetmeats, tobacco also and Betel, Tinder-boxes, two or three for failing, and a deer's skin to make us shoes."

They only wore waistcoats like the natives and had grown great beards.

They ran at one time into a "Parcel of Towns" and hid in a hollow tree. The river was full of alligators, and they encountered bears, hogs, deer, and wild buffaloes. At length, as they descended, the river dried up, being only pools between sandy stretches, so they were able to walk in the bed of it; but even this had its drawbacks, as they had to take great care not to be seen, so they travelled by night, but when it was a "dark moon" they couldn't get on at all, "the River anights so full of elephants and other wild beasts coming to drink."

At last, after nearly a week, having started from Anuradhapura on a Sunday, they arrived at the Dutch fort of Arripe on the coast, on Saturday afternoon, and were warmly received by the inhabitants, and sent first to Colombo and thence to Batavia, where they picked up an English ship.

On the way home Knox wrote his story, which was published through the East India Company. It is marvellous that having been so long away from civilisation, when apparently he had been unable to take any notes, he should have written down everything in such clear and detailed fashion, showing a wonderful memory.

His book gives a unique picture of the life of the Cingalese under the Kandyan kings. It is a wonderful contemporary record, and should be read by every one interested in Ceylon.

CHAPTER II

THE ROAD THROUGH THE JUNGLE

CEYLON is slung like a drop-pearl from the southernmost point of India. Where the major and minor axes cross one another, much nearer to the southern end than the northern, lies the hill-country of which Kandy is the centre. Almost due north of Kandy, along the major axis, at some eighty-nine miles' distance, is Anuradhapura, which is just about half-way between Kandy and the north of the island.

The road between Kandy and Anuradhapura is itself bisected at Dambulla, where the main highway from Colombo to Trincomalee crosses it diagonally. Those who go to Anuradhapura by road will find Dambulla a convenient half-way house, but those who go by rail from Colombo do not visit Kandy at all. They start on the Kandy line, but change at Polgahawela junction some hours short of Kandy, and go directly north to Anuradhapura. The best train in the day, starting in the cool of the morning, catches a direct connection at the junction, and the journey takes five hours and a half. The scenes passed through are pleasant enough though not wildly exciting. The natives working in their paddy

fields, the buffaloes, with the little white cranes in attendance on them, and the palm and plantain plantations show many a peaceful picture, and beyond Polgahawela the line runs on straight through mile after mile of jungle of infinite tangle and variety, where masses of a bell-like flower are here and there broken by flashes of the royal red *Gloriosa superba*.

In the little clearings for paddy almost invariably there is a small thatch and mat shelter, raised on rickety-looking bamboo posts, in which the owners can sit in safety to scare wild creatures from the crop, and in the great tanks covered with lotus flowers lie the ungainly water buffaloes with only their heads showing.

The best time to visit Ceylon is not in the last but the first months of the year, and those who come earlier must be prepared to face some rain, more or less according to whether the monsoon, beginning in October, has already exhausted itself or not.

The roads are, as a whole, excellent, though sometimes narrow. Every motorist should manage to get hold of that fascinating, but curiously unequal, book *Fifty Years in Ceylon*,[1] by Major T. B. Skinner, because it is to Skinner we owe many of the main roads. He came out to Ceylon in 1818 as a lad of fourteen, and received a commission in the Ceylon Regiment, though he was so small that his full-sized sword was a serious embarrassment. When sent up-country and told to make a road with a gradient of "one in twenty," he had not the slightest idea what was meant!

[1] W. H. Allen & Co. 1891.

But without technical knowledge he set himself to the task, and succeeded so well that in later years he was put in charge of the public works —roads and bridges—then in the Quartermaster General's Department before the existence of the P.W.D., and under his superintendence the roads in the district now described were made. The Kandy-Dambulla road was laid out in 1831–2, and at Dambulla it met the Colombo-Trincomalee road, so far accomplished, which was then carried forward, and on the day it was completed an Order in Council abolished compulsory labour in the island, and thus freed the natives from an exaction, which, under their own later kings, had become almost as intolerable as the corvée in Egypt. In going to Anuradhapura by road from Colombo some choose the direct way by Kurunegala, but the greater number of people prefer to go via Kandy. It means about thirty miles more but the road is better, and there is an opportunity for seeing Kandy *en route*. This is preferable even for those who possess their own motors, but the argument is stronger still in the case of those who want to hire a car, because the first part of the journey from Colombo to Kandy is best accomplished by rail, as it involves a heavy climb, and the start by road can be made from Kandy, thus saving mileage. Excellent motors can be hired in either Colombo or Kandy (Walker Sons & Co. Ltd.), at the rate of about £4 (60 rupees) a day, including a competent chauffeur and his keep.

The grand scenery of this part of the railway is too well known to need description, the splen-

dours of the rocky heights, clad with rich jungle growth, rising on one side, the ranges of the far hills and deep valleys on the other, spreading out as the train winds along a narrow ledge turning and twisting, are familiar to all who know anything whatever of Ceylon.

As already stated, the distance from Kandy to Anuradhapura is eighty-nine miles. There is a capital road map, published by the P. & O.S.N. Co., showing all the possible roads in the island; this should be obtained before starting.

From Kandy the first part of the way is excellent, and almost all in shade in the early morning. It was the end of December when I left the Queen's Hotel, and the weather, which had been very uncertain, and at times hopelessly wet, cleared up for the day and was as perfect as only Ceylon weather can be. The road winds around, dropping here and there steeply, with sharp curves requiring careful driving. The flowers for which Ceylon is so famous are seen in masses; they include the trumpet-shaped white blossoms of the *Datura fastuosa*, the little bright terra-cotta blossoms of the ubiquitous lantana, and immense yellow daisies, resembling leopard's bane in all but the foliage.

It gives one a queer sensation to look down on a little patch of cropped green by a waterhole and see tortoises feeding on the grass as rabbits do at home. But this is one of the local touches that add savour to the experience!

About three miles out the mighty River Mahawelliganga is crossed. In old days this formed a barrier, cutting off the hill-country of Rohuna,

the refuge of dispossessed princes, from the settled territory in the neighbourhood of the capital.

Then the road winds through tea, coffee, rubber, cocoa, and, later on, pepper plantations. The red pods of the cocoa hang over the road in clusters, looking exactly like their pictures in familiar advertisements. The workers in the plantations are mostly Tamils, and the women in their red patterned *saris*, with their large ornamental gold earrings of a cockleshell pattern covering the whole of the extended lobe of the ear, are quite picturesque. Young Ceylon, with slates and copy-books, winds its way to school, clad in small European-made frocks or in nothing at all, as the fancy takes its parents. As the weather had been so uncertain, umbrellas of every sort and shade, adorned with patches of many hues, were frequently carried; those who cannot afford an umbrella in Ceylon fall back on the leaves of the talipot palm, which, even as in the days of Knox's sojourn in the island, are used as shelters from the rain. These leaves are of a V-shape and fold up like a fan. They are really in many ways more convenient than an umbrella, and it is surprising that some enterprising firm has not patented an umbrella modelled on their lines. They can be constantly seen, and are carried by all ages and classes, from the shy child, who uses hers as a screen to hide her face, to the demure monk, starting on a journey, with his folded talipot under one arm, and a small boy carrying a minute satchel, containing all his worldly gear, following him. Like others of the numerous palm tribe, the talipot is made use of in many ways ; from its leaves are prepared

the best of the *olas*, the palm-leaf books used by the monks, which were for centuries the only kind of books known in the island, and on which are written the originals of the famous chronicles, and the sacred *suttas*, or discourses. The talipot flowers only once after many years, and the supreme effort appears to exhaust it, for from thenceforward it decays. As we emerged from a wooded gorge, we saw on the rising slopes opposite, one of these fine trees rearing itself to a height of fifty feet or more, with a plumed head, sandy-coloured, in the moment of its chief glory.

Before reaching Matalé the road climbs the summit of a range of hills, and then rapidly drops 700 feet to the town. Here the railway line ends, and there is nothing but road traffic beyond. Matalé is a great cattle centre, and droves of the glossy skinned beasts may be met from time to time, dappled with the light and shade as they pass reluctantly along the tree-bordered road.

The town boasts also one of the largest bazaars in the province, and as the car runs through, on either side may be seen the endless rows of open-fronted shops, little more than cells or stalls, where native products are thrust aside in favour of piles of cotton goods and tinned stuffs from Europe, and the sewing-machine rivals the native crickets in its noise-making industry.

Straight through Matalé we pass, in at one end and out at the other, and about two miles after leaving the town behind, a narrow turn on the left indicates the way to the rocky monastery called Alu-vihara, where the sacred books of Buddhist Ceylon, transmitted orally from the time of

Mahinda till between 104 B.C. and 76 B.C., were then written down on olas; the text of the Pitakatha in Pali and the commentary, or Attakatha, in Cingalese, to be afterwards translated into Pali by Buddhaghosa, who came from Magadha in A.D. 412; these commentaries of his are among the most important Buddhist books of Ceylon, for the Cingalese version is not now extant. These are the Sacred Books, quite different from the Mahawansa, which is historical. The date of the important work of transcription is noted in the Mahawansa.

The road declines in interest before Dambulla (pronounced Dambool), which is reached at about forty-five miles. The rest-house at the far end of the village is quite good, and late breakfast or lunch can be always obtained. With its screen of flowering pink antigonon growing over a trellis and its bright-coloured crotons in pots, it is a picturesque little place, if it is not—as on the day of my arrival—dressed up in stiff fringes and arches of plaited and pinned palm leaves in honour of the passing through of the government agent of the North Central Province!

As far as Dambulla a sort of mail-coach runs from Matalé, and on this any particularly enterprising person could probably find a seat, but beyond this point only private means of locomotion prevail. A motor-bicycle is admirable, and even an ordinary cycle to an energetic, resourceful person would be very useful, as the road surface is sufficiently good except after heavy rain.

If any one is not already satiated with cave-temples, it is worth while to go up to those of Dambulla, for the ascent is not very terrific, and

the view splendid. The path breaks off about half-way through the village a quarter of a mile back from the rest-house; no guide is necessary. The ascent lies first over a great slope of black rock, and as we rise the country opens out on all sides, showing wide spaces of jungle. Then we pass up steps under shady avenues of green, broken by the bare twigs of the temple-trees, carrying their load of sweet-scented blossoms.

At the top we go through a brick gateway (*muragé*) and so on to the platform. From here there is a fine panorama, including many conical and oddly lumpy hills, rising abruptly from the sea of jungle even to the far distance. The great sugar-loaf near at hand, completely covered with trees and scrub, is *Dahiya Kande*, and from one point the odd mushroom-shaped rock of Sigiri, for eighteen years the capital of the kingdom, can be made out far to the north-east.

There are five temples altogether; the first stands detached and contains a recumbent statue of Buddha, forty-seven feet long, cut out of the solid rock. He rests on an ornamental pillow and the soles of the feet are carved with lotus flowers. On the rock face by the door is an inscription recording the virtues of King Nissanka Malla (A.D. 1198), whose statue is in one of the other caves. He is chiefly celebrated for his inscriptions, by which he propagated for the benefit of posterity the fame of his many virtues (see p. 196). These shrines are undoubtedly as ancient as the earliest foundation of the Buddhist religion in Ceylon, but they were brought prominently into notice by King Walagambahu (or Watagemunu),

104 B.C., who fled here to hide from the Tamils, almost immediately after he had succeeded to the throne. He remained in these great caverns where he had taken refuge, for about sixteen years, before he regained his throne and returned to Anuradhapura.

The mingling of Buddhism and Hinduism is very apparent in all these temples. The name of the first, *Dewa Raja Vihara*, means the "Temple of the Great God," a reference to Vishnu, and a statue of Vishnu in wood stands near the head of the Buddha, and is considered equally sacred, or even more so. The stone doorway is decorated, and near it is a carved cistern. The outside of all the rest of the caves is rendered hideous by a modern brick excrescence, a sort of verandah, of which the monks are exceedingly proud. The interiors are too gloomy to be managed photographically with success. The whole group of monks and neophytes, with the addition of a small boy who had attached himself to me as interpreter, followed me about pointing out the inartistic work that was being done as if it conferred special merit on themselves.

The next temple is large, and is a natural cave, sloping up and outwards. The whole of the roof is covered with fresco paintings, brilliant in gaudy colour, renewed from time to time. The Buddha is carved from the living rock, as is the case also in the succeeding temples, but the seated Buddhas, forming a semicircle round the inner wall behind the shrine, are of painted clay. In this cavern alone there are fifty-eight statues. The most interesting of the fresco paintings are at the back,

including some of Vishnu, always referred to by the monks as "god," and some showing the victorious Dutugemunu and dying Elala, the planting of the bo-tree and other scenes from the royal city; these are said to have been executed by monks from Anuradhapura. In this cave a vessel is placed to catch the clear water, which falls ceaselessly, drop by drop, throughout the year, even in the driest season, from one particular place in the roof.

The third temple, *Maha Alut Vihara*, or the "Great New Temple," is large also, and includes almost as many statues as the preceding one.

In making the tour of these temples it is well to be provided with plenty of small change, for though the priests of Buddha are not supposed to possess money or to accrete worldly goods in any form, they are not above eagerly indicating the collection-box in every single cave visited. However, a very small piece dropped into one or two of the boxes satisfies them. The last two temples are small, and one of them, more modern than the rest, contains a statue of one of the latest Kandyan kings.

The people in the village of Dambulla and around are nearly all Cingalese.

If we were going to Polonnaruwa, the later Cingalese capital, or to the great rock of Sigiri, we should, after Dambulla, turn off north-eastward on the Trincomalee road, but as these capitals can best be understood after a visit to Anuradhapura, it is wiser to go there first.

Continuing our way therefore, we run along a delightful road where handsome flowers may be noticed here and there in the jungle scrub; the most conspicuous is a creeper, which looks at a

distance like a vivid red honeysuckle, but on examination proves to be quite a different type. This is the *Gloriosa superba*, already mentioned, and fitly named, a royal plant, holding up a corona of frilled red tongue-like petals in the form of a cup. There are also bushes of wild hybiscus, showing white blossoms with splashes of purple in the centre, blossoms which burn bright pink as they fade. With the lantana, which appears by the roadside, is mingled a blue flower rather like lavender, forming an excellent contrast. Also very frequently to be noticed is a bush with snow-white leaves scattered irregularly amid the ordinary green ones ; it is related to the poinsettia tribe. With all this decorative colouring, there is no lack of variety by the way.

If possible a détour should be made from Kekirawa, twelve miles from Dambulla, to visit Kala-Wewa, one of the large stand most important of the restored tanks of the ancient kings. This was made by King Dhatu Sena (A.D. 459), and will ever be associated with his touching plea to be allowed to bathe there once more before his death as already described on p. 26. There is a rest-house at Kekirawa, but any meal required should be ordered beforehand. Thence it is about five miles to the brink of the tank on foot, and a couple of miles further by road. The tank as originally made and planned was enormous, the water laving the foot of the rock at Dambulla. Though considerably curtailed now, having been ruined by the bursting or destruction of the embankment at some unknown date, it is still large, forming a sort of double or twin-tank, with a total area of about seven square miles. It receives the

water from the central hill country by means of channels, and in turn is connected with Anuradhapura by a winding canal, the Yoda-ela, or Giant's Canal, between fifty and sixty miles long, due also in its origin to King Dhatu Sena, who had magnificent ideas and carried them out worthily. The canal joins up the great Tissa tank at Anuradhapura, and incidentally, on its way, supplies several village tanks.

The restoration of the tank took three years, and it was reopened in 1888.

A few ruins of a very early settlement at Vijitapura can be seen *en route* to the tank, and two and a half miles north-west of the spill-wall is an interesting tall rock-carved figure of Buddha in what must once have been a temple, the Aukana Vihara. The great bund on the western side of the tank and the enormous spill-wall are worth examining, as they speak perhaps more eloquently of the power and value of the ancient irrigation work of the old kings, by which the great part of Ceylon was made cultivatable, than anything else. When the tanks fell into ruin, and irrigation was destroyed by the incursions of the Tamils, the jungle once more crept over the land, and its power to support a large population decreased correspondingly. It is only since the British took over the island that roads have been opened up, ancient tanks and channels restored, and the jungle cut down. This Vijitapura or Wijitapura has sometimes been identified with Wijito (see p. 22), besieged by Dutugemunu, but beyond the name there seems no evidence of this, and good authorities discredit it.

CHAPTER III

THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF ANURADHAPURA

It is difficult to do justice to the beauty of Anuradhapura; it combines so much not usually found in an eastern town. The wide park-like spaces of short grass are shaded by the beautiful spreading "rain-trees," so-called because their leaves fold together at night, and, opening in the morning, drop dew on the heads of those who pass below. The grass is studded with ruins, showing many a specimen of exquisite carving in granite, fresh as the day it was done, possibly 2,000 years ago. The three mighty dagabas, Ruanweli, Abhayagiri, and Jetawanarama, with their tree-grown summits—great mounds of millions and millions of bricks—can at some points be seen all at once; while the glimmering of the blue or sunset-dyed water of Tissa Wewa or Basawak Kulam seen through the trees adds distance and mystery to many a view. Kulam is the word for tank in Tamil, as wewa is in Cingalese, and wapi or vapi in Pali or Sanskrit. Further north, where the people are almost all Tamils, the word kulam is generally used.

Many people "do" Anuradhapura in a day



TISSA-WEWA. p. 48



ANURADHAPURA HOTEL. p. 50



THE SACRED BO-TREE

(THE OLDEST HISTORICAL TREE IN THE WORLD).

p. 54

and think they have seen it all. It is possible that they can see a good deal, for the principal sights are near together, but many weeks may easily be spent here without exhausting its wonders. Fergusson[1] says that Ceylon alone of all known countries possesses a series of Buddhistic monuments extending from the time of Asoka to the present day. Most of them may be found in this city.

The walls of this wonderful city have never been discovered, its exact boundaries are unknown, the royal residence of its kings has not been unearthed. Nearly all the ruins which lie together have obviously been of some ecclesiastical or sacred use, so that it has been suggested that the residential part of the city lies elsewhere and has still to be discovered. Some people have even professed to find in the "pavilions" on the Outer Circular Road westward the remains of this district, for these buildings, though similar in character among themselves, are entirely different in construction from the ordinary type of monastery or vihara. This theory concerning them will be discussed more fully later on. Apart from this we can picture ancient Anuradhapura lying due north and south, equalling present-day London in extent, housing a huge population, and presenting evidence of a civilisation we are accustomed to consider exclusively our own. Major T. B. Skinner, who visited the place in 1832, says, "No one that I could ever hear of had travelled through it, not even a government agent, and from the fact of its being so completely a

[1] *History of Indian Architecture.* (Murray. 1910 edition.)

terra incognita I took an unusual interest in exploring it." [1] In this, however, he was not quite correct, for Major Forbes had visited it in 1828 in company with a government agent.

In 1907 a fine hotel was opened to supersede the little rest-house, now the post-office, which until then had served for visitors, but in the season even the accommodation of the hotel is strained to the utmost, and rooms must be booked some time beforehand. It stands on the south-west of the town on large grounds, once the government gardens. Numerous species of trees have been brought together here; they are labelled or numbered, and there is a list of them in the hotel, so that it is easy to identify any especially noticed. Prices are fixed by government (8 rupees a day inclusive), and out here terms really are inclusive, covering baths and afternoon tea and other items, by means of which European hotel-keepers run up exorbitant bills. The hotel has all the charm of eastern style, with open verandahs and deep eaves; it faces north, a great consideration in this climate. At night the peevish whine of the flying foxes is heard in the trees and a myriad fireflies shine among the branches like wandering stars. From far off come the weird screams of a pack of jackals racing along the bund of the tank or searching for scraps round the outlying huts.

For those who have arrived by train and do not possess motor-cars, transit around the district is not difficult. The hotel trap can be hired very reasonably (a rupee first hour, half a rupee each

[1] *Fifty Years in Ceylon.*

hour after), and if it is already engaged, bullock hackries can be had at a still cheaper rate.

The story of King Pandukabhaya (437 B.C.), who first founded the city of Anuradhapura, is as full of excitement as the old legends of Greece. His grandmother the queen gave birth to ten sons and one daughter, Chitta, who was the youngest, and of whom it was foretold that her son should destroy his maternal uncles and usurp the throne. Naturally they wanted to put her to death, and oddly enough, considering the times, they did not do so. But to make everything safe, she was confined in an apartment built on a single pillar. However, as she was of course exquisitely lovely, the pre-ordained prince soon made his way to her secretly, and she "carried on an intrigue by sending him presents of betel leaves, and receiving from him fragrant flowers and other gifts," until the intercourse was discovered by the brothers. As the suitor was of high birth, they agreed to let their sister marry him on condition the expected child were slain if a boy. When the child was born, the mother (as in all fairy tales) conveniently substituted a peasant's daughter and handed over her son to be brought up by a peasant.

When in course of time the bad uncles discovered how they had been tricked, they hunted diligently to find the boy's whereabouts, and learned that he was in the habit of bathing with other boys in a certain marsh, so they gave orders to their attendants to kill all boys found so bathing. Pandukabhaya, as the lad was called, dived under water and slipped up inside

a hollow tree, and so escaped. Once again he miraculously escaped a similar fate in later years. When he grew up he married a beautiful princess, who had the charming gift of turning the leaves of trees into gold. He also captured a "Yakkha," or witch-mare, who carried him to victory, so that in time he met in battle and slew eight of his uncles. Observing the skulls of his eight uncles surmounting the heap of heads (of the rest of the slain), he remarked, "It is like a heap of fruit." Such a young man was naturally destined to go far. . . . In course of time he called upon one of his remaining uncles at Anuradhapura. This gentleman, after giving up the palace to him peaceably, was allowed to live, as was also the eldest uncle, Abhaya.

"Having consulted a fortune-teller versed in the advantages (which a town ought to possess), according to his directions, he founded an extensive city in that very village. On account of its having been the settlement of Anuradho and because it was founded under the constellation Anuradho, it was called Anuradhapura." (Mahawansa.)

Major Forbes in his admirable book [1] refers to this in a note, saying :

"It is the general belief of uneducated natives that the name of the city is derived from Anurajah (ninety kings), but it was from the name of the constellation, Anuradha."

[1] *Eleven Years in Ceylon.* (Bentley. Second edition 1841.)

But it was only from the time of Uttiya (267 B.C.) it became the settled capital until A.D. 729 (with an interlude of Sigiriya in A.D. 477). Then Polonnaruwa was the capital to A.D. 1013, and again, with breaks, up to 1314. King Pandu's second son was Tissa, in whose reign one of the most momentous events in the whole history of the island took place, for, as already related, Ceylon was converted to Buddhism by Mahinda, son of the great Asoka. The king met him on Mihintale Hill, eight miles from the town, and when he returned, bringing with him the great missionary, the people were naturally anxious to see him, and clamoured at the palace gates. If we could only know to-day exactly where that palace stood! The king said to his noisy subjects, "For all of you to assemble in this place is insufficient; prepare the great stables of the state elephants: there the inhabitants of the capital may see these *theros*." The people, however, declared "the elephant stables also are too confined," and so they went to "the royal pleasure-garden Nandana, situated without the southern gate, in a delightful forest, cool from its deep shade and soft green turf."

Subsequently, after addressing the multitude, the saintly stranger went "out of the southern gate of the Nandana pleasure-garden to the Mahamego pleasure-garden by its south-western gate." "There (on the western side of the spot where the bo-tree was subsequently planted), furnishing a delightful royal palace with splendid beds, chairs, and other conveniences in the most complete manner, he (the king) said, 'Do thou

sojourn here in comfort.' " The king then dedicated the Mahamego pleasure-garden to the priesthood. Thereafter he marked the limits of the ground thus given and ploughed the boundary line with a golden plough.

Exquisitely painted vases, gorgeous flags tinkling with the bells attached to them, mirrors of glittering glass, festoons and baskets of flowers were carried in procession; triumphal arches were made of plantain trees, women carried umbrellas, and hundreds ran waving handkerchiefs. The whole scene is so human and natural we can picture it without difficulty, and we even know whereabouts it happened, for the bo-tree stands to this day and gives us a landmark.

The planting of this sacred tree—*Ficus Religiosa*—was one of the earliest events in the history of the city. And to-day the road from the station passes it. It is in the centre of the ground mentioned above which was given as a pleasure-garden by the king to the priests.

Come and visit the courtyard, passing through the ugly portal described on the first page of this book. Outside there are vendors of temple flowers and of pyramids of the unopened buds of the lotus, white and pink, looking like piles of fruit. It is a work of merit to buy these and turn back each petal lovingly until the flowers are fully opened before they are offered.

It is more than likely we shall be beset by beggars in the courtyard beyond the entrance, but Cingalese beggars are as a rule easily repulsed, and are not so audacious as those of India.

Under the shade of innumerable bo-trees, sprung

from the parent-tree, sits a calm Buddha, close by a curious wooden lintel and posts. This is the only fragment of ancient woodwork remaining in Anuradhapura amid all the brick and stone, and, though of course not ancient in comparison with some of the latter, is interesting on its own account. Mount to the higher terrace, and from there again up a steeper flight of steps to another, where there is a walk all round the tree, itself on a higher level still. In fact, the masonry consists of four platforms, each rather smaller than the one below, so as to leave a walk or terrace round it. It is said that originally the sacred tree was on the ground-level, but it has been built up by rich and special soil until the roots are far below the present surface.

Through two sets of railings, between which runs a narrow walk, we can gaze at the twisted stems of this amazing tree, carrying still a goodly crop of large pear-shaped leaves, resembling those of a balsam poplar. The wall of the innermost terrace is banked by ugly glazed green tiles, such as are used for the sides of suburban fireplaces.

When I visited the sacred spot a second time, after many years' interval, a line of devout worshippers was swaying and bowing, chanting monotonously on the outer terrace ; while, alone on the inner one a monk, in a robe toned by frequent washing to an exquisite cinnamon colour, strode up and down. A mother-monkey, clasping her baby to her breast, ran down the sacred tree, but hurriedly scrambled back on seeing the monk in such close proximity. Her antipathy

was natural, for the monks object to the irreverent monkeys, and even attempted to banish them, but without success. The tree was surrounded by hundreds of little three-cornered flags, the offerings of pilgrims, and in vain I tried to find a spot where it was sufficiently visible to be photographed. The difficulty was increased by the fact that the light is at all times bad, for the tree is overshadowed by buildings and higher trees growing in the vicinity. The only result of this first attempt was—flags, and a clear view of the prop that supports the ancient stem, so that the picture seemed to call aloud for the title of "Monday in the suburbs." I came again many times without result, and remembered regretfully the time long ago when I had wandered at will beneath the very shadow of the tree and even picked up one of the leaves which happened to float to my feet. No such chance now! The leaves are esteemed of immense value, and even the devoutest of pilgrims has difficulty in getting one. At last, one day, speaking through an interpreter, I managed to persuade the solemn-faced monk who strode within the enclosure, of the earnestness of my desire, and he agreed to open the padlocked gate provided I removed my shoes before entering. I agreed readily, as the space was strewn with clean sand, and, making the most of the opportunity, obtained a result showing the actual tree (see p. 49).

It was the sister of Mahinda, Princess Sanghamitta, who, following him in 288 B.C. to the island, brought with her a branch of the bo-tree under which Buddha sat in India when he received



THE PEACOCK PALACE.

p. 60



MOONSTONE AT ANURADHAPURA. p. 71



THE BRAZEN PALACE. p. 61

revelation. According to the accepted account the branch of the bo-tree, being encircled with a vermilion pencil, had immediately severed itself from the parent tree and planted itself in the golden vase prepared for it. For seven days the princess, with her eleven attendant priestesses, journeyed to the port of embarkation, and seven days were occupied by their voyage across the ocean. When the great train of people arrived at Ceylon, King Tissa met them with all state and rushed into the waves up to his neck, chanting forth in his zeal and fervour, "This is the bo from the bo-tree" (at which Buddha attained Buddhahood). When they finally reached the capital, the roads were sprinkled with white sand, decorated with every variety of flowers, and lined with banners and garlands. "At the hour when the shadows are most extended he [the king] entered the superbly decorated capital by the northern gate, and passing in procession out of the southern gate, and entering the Mahamego garden, came to the spot destined for the tree." And when the ceremony of the miraculous planting had been accomplished, "A heavy deluge of rain fell around and dense cold clouds completely enveloped the great Bo in its snowy womb for seven days." Which shows the climate must have been as moist then as now. This was nineteen years after the king's conversion, which had happened in the first year of his reign.

Princess Sanghamitta and her followers were installed in a delightful building called the Hatthalako. The king lived to 267 B.C., Mahinda survived him eight years, and the princess lived

one year more. The tree is constantly referred to throughout the Mahawansa ; any such terrible catastrophe as its death or decay could not have been concealed. It is as certain as anything of the kind can be that this tree has stood here over 2,200 years, and whether it came originally from the sacred tree of Buddha or not, it has attained sanctity on its own account. A temple was built over it, and in its honour was instituted a water festival, which was held every twelfth year and kept up for generations. Miracles were recorded of the tree and firmly believed in ; pilgrims came, and still continue to come, from far and wide, to prostrate themselves before it, and it is one of the Eight Sacred Sites of the Buddhist community called in their own tongue the *Atamasthana*.

Sir E. Tennent tersely sums up the case thus :

"Compared with it the oak of Ellerslie is but a sapling, and the Conqueror's oak in Windsor Forest barely numbers half its years. The yew-trees of Fountains Abbey are believed to have flourished there twelve hundred years ago ; the olives in the Garden of Gethsemane were full-grown when the Saracens were expelled from Jerusalem ; and the cypress of Soma, in Lombardy, is said to have been a tree in the time of Julius Cæsar ; yet, the Bo-tree is older than the oldest of these by a century, and would almost seem to verify the prophecy pronounced when it was planted, that it would 'flourish and be green for ever.'"[1]

Such a tree must inspire the most careless with a passing feeling of reverence.

[1] *Ceylon*. (Longmans. 1860.)

Close by the bo-tree is the bazaar with its long straggling street. These "bazaars" are getting more and more given up to the display of cheap European goods, and increasingly difficult is it to pick up home-made wares, but some good baskets, admirably plaited, and of convenient shapes, can be bought in Anuradhapura.

The "cab-stand," where bullock hackries congregate, is in the middle of the bazaar. It is not often, however, that a good trotting bullock is available unless by special arrangement, and with any other sort progress is very slow. But the bullocks are usually kindly treated and fairly well-fed; there is not a great deal of tail-twisting, and sores are rare. The Indian variety, with long curved horns, is seen as plentifully as the little stumpy-horned bullocks of Ceylon. The animal has the yoke fixed to bear against the hump, and a few strands of rope secure it under his neck. The result is that if any weight is thrown suddenly at the back of the cart he is in danger of being strangled, and much dexterity has to be exercised in adjusting the weight for mounting and descending from the carts, which are two-wheeled only. The charge for these hackries is half a rupee an hour, and the longer you keep him waiting anywhere on the way the better pleased is the sleepy-headed native driver.

The well-being of the people is carefully considered by the authorities. Between the bazaar and the hotel are three large ponds kept strictly "by order" for drinking, bathing, and washing purposes respectively. The unregenerate native, like his Burmese brother, much prefers to bathe,

wash his clothes, and drink—in that order—all in the same water, but he is learning better things.

The bathing-pond is greatly appreciated; at every hour of the day men and women, at their respective sets of steps, dip and pour water over their black shining locks, and they are always clad with perfect decency. Small boys meantime catch miniature fish, and are as eager and proud of the results as their little white brothers. At the washing-pond energetic dhobies smack the white clothes on the stones with reports like pistol-shots, and the tortoises sit pensively with outstretched necks in the little hollows under the bank watching them. The green grass behind is perpetually spread with drying clothes.

Not far from these ponds, between them and the bazaar, is the English Church, and a road running parallel with that through the bazaar, on the north, passes between two small beautifully built bathing-tanks, disused now, though one has been excellently repaired. Tanks such as these, formed with hewn stone for bathing purposes, are called *pokuna*, and are a very noticeable feature of ancient Ceylon. There are other larger specimens also at Anuradhapura.

At the bazaar end, near the bo-tree, there are some ruins of antiquity actually among the houses, the so-called Peacock Palace, a collection of leaning columns and carved capitals, enclosed in barbed wire to keep them from desecration, being one. Nothing is known as to the origin of its decorative name, and it was obviously a vihara, or temple, and never a "palace." This is a little way down the Kurunegala Road, almost opposite

to the Archæological Survey Offices and the small attached museum. Returning again to the other side of the bazaar near the fruit market, we see the ruin of the *Ransimalakaya* also enclosed. This at one time was used merely as a cattle pound, and was only saved from total destruction by being enclosed. The name is a modern one; its history also being unknown.

But far the most striking object in the vicinity of the bo-tree is the group of 1,600 columns known as *Lohopasada*, or the Brazen Palace, built first in the reign of King Dutugemunu in the second century B.C., though subsequently often restored. We have a most minute account of the building of this marvellous place in the Mahawansa. The king, contrary to the usual custom of his time, decided to pay his workmen, and before beginning deposited "eight lacs" and a thousand suits of clothing, and vessels filled with honey and sugar at the four gates for their use. The palace rose to the height of nine storeys (afterwards reduced to seven), all covered with brazen tiles, which shone like gold in the burning sun. It was surrounded by a polished wall broken by the four gates, which were "embattled." Inside, the splendour was so great as to be almost unbelievable. Each storey contained one hundred apartments festooned with beads and flower ornaments consisting of gems set in gold. There was a gilt hall supported on golden columns in the centre, and besides the usual decorations this hall had festoons of pearls also. In the centre was an ivory throne with the sun on it in gold, the moon in silver, and the stars in pearls. As for the

furnishing of this magnificent shell, it sounds like that of a modern house, for it was provided with chairs and couches and woollen carpets, but all of the most costly materials of their kind, for it is particularly mentioned that even the ladle of the rice-boiler was of gold! It is not exactly known with what intention this splendid building was founded, but it is supposed to have been the chief residence of the monks of the Maha vihara, the most important and oldest established community in Anuradhapura. This word *vihara*, or *viharé*, for it is written either way, is applied either to monasteries or temples in the Mahawansa, but always refers to some religious building and never to a secular one. A vihara seems to have been at first a hall or meeting-place of monks, and afterwards was naturally used to signify a temple which may have included an inner shrine.

The gnarled grey monoliths are still standing in a perfect forest closely crowded together and occupy the space of a fair-sized English cathedral. They are in forty parallel lines with forty pillars in each. The problem is to conjecture how anyone could have found space to walk between them, but it is highly probable that the ground-space was not occupied, being, after the fashion of the *choungs*, or monks' dwellings in Burma, merely an open space unwalled. The building underwent many vicissitudes, being thrown down by Maha Sena, the "apostate" king in A.D. 286, and rebuilt by his son and successor. It will be noted that in the centre and at the corners the columns are of double thickness, com-

pared with the outer ones, which are narrower, having been split, probably to supply the place of some which had been lost or broken. The last rebuilding was due to Parakrama the Great in the twelfth century.

I do not know if the Cingalese monks, like the Burmese ones, dislike having any one's feet above their heads, but it seems that it cannot have been so in the old days if each storey were divided into a number of apartments (the round number 100 may be taken as merely symbolic of many) instead of those above the first being merely ornamental shells, roofed in but unoccupied as in Burmese monasteries.

It is a curious sensation to stand alone in this stone forest, recalling the march of time and picturing the sombre flitting of the dark-skinned priests, and the many intrigues which were carried on within these precincts ages ago.

> " But all their life is rounded by a shade,
> And every road goes down behind the rim."

Now the little striped furry-tailed squirrels run up and down with a curious clockwork movement, and flitting lizards sun themselves and vanish.

The legend told of the common or palm-squirrel is that it helped the monkeys in making Adam's Bridge for the god Rama, by rolling in the sand and so gathering it up in its hairs, and then bestowing it between the stones to bind them together. To encourage it Rama stroked it with three fingers, leaving the impress in the form of three stripes down its back.

Straight up from the Bo-tree, past the Brazen

Palace runs the Sacred Road, for tens of hundreds of years trodden by the feet of pilgrims. Overshadowed by spreading "rain-trees," bordered by green spaces, this ancient road was one of the great thoroughfares of Anuradhapura the Royal. Down it have passed in procession the halt and sick, eager to be cured, believing that the sight of the blessed Bo-tree would restore health; the beggar making the most of his misery; the schemer; the braggart Pharisee; the humble-minded and devout; the woman aching for the joys and pains of motherhood; the young boy on the threshold of life, awed by its mystery. Surrounded by his courtiers, with flashing umbrellas and flags, and accompanied by the beat of drums came the despotic king, holding in his hand the lives of thousands of such as these, and maybe in his train followed the blood-thirsty prince, his near relative, scheming to dispossess him. They glide by, these shadows of the past, and then the vision falls away like a coloured veil—one sees the road, empty save for two Cingalese clerks, clad in European garments and with cropped heads, hastening to the *Kachcheri*, or government offices, to work under the direction of white men of whom these ancestors of theirs had never heard.

The next object that attracts attention, bulking huge across the space where cattle are peacefully feeding, is the great dagaba Ruanweli. Of all the ideas that entered the mind of man this surely was the most extraordinary—to erect huge piles of stones in the shape of an inverted bowl, solid except for a tiny passage to a secret chamber



RUANWELI DAGABA.



MAKARA BALUSTRADE. p. 74



DALADA MALIGAWA, ANURADHAPURA. p. 81

which contained a relic! Closely akin in idea to the pagodas of Burma, these dagabas are yet quite different in style. Fergusson says in a note in his *Indian Architecture*:

"Dâgaba is a Singalese word applied to a stûpa, from the Sanskrit 'dhâtu,' a 'relic,' 'element' and 'garbha,' a 'womb,' 'receptacle,' or 'shrine.' Dhatugharba is thus the relic-receptacle or inner shrine, and is strictly applicable only to the dome of the stupa."

He mentions in another place the word *Chaitya* as applied to stupas, and it is as a *Chetiyo*, the same word, that Ruanweli is continually referred to in the Mahawansa, but there is no need in this book to multiply confusion in the multiplication of foreign words, and dagaba is usually employed.

Ruanweli was a real dagaba in the sense of being a relic store-house, while Abhayagiri and Jetawanarama were merely commemoration piles, but have been equally described as dagabas though lacking the intrinsic meaning of the word; these are the three largest known dagabas. It is necessary to imagine the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral sliced off and set on the ground in order to get some idea of these curious buildings without seeing one. The upper part of Ruanweli is to-day covered with green jungle scrub, while the lower is rendered hideous by a huge new binding wall. Ruanweli is one of the Eight Sacred Places at Anuradhapura held by the Buddhist community or Atamasthana, the others being the Bo-tree, Brazen Palace, Abhayagiri, Thuparama, Jeta-



wanarama, Lankarama, and Mirisaveti dagabas. Consequently the archæological survey authorities are not responsible for its preservation. Some years ago a great slice of it fell down, burying in its débris three or four statues of a king (supposed to be Dutugemunu) and four Buddhas supposed to represent the four Buddhas of this *kalpa*, which formerly stood along the platform—for this huge bowl is surrounded by a platform of set granite blocks, and on the sides of the dagaba at the four cardinal points are four altars, or "screens," facing outwards. That facing south is decorated with elephants' heads in relief. Among the rubble and fallen bricks work plump little Tamil women, who chatter as they sort the still perfect bricks from the piles, and carry them over to the workmen who are building up the great new supporting wall. The scarp of the outer platform, which is square, is now buried to a great extent beneath the rubble mounds, but was once decorated with elephants' heads in relief, facing outwards, shoulder to shoulder, all round. These were made of brick, coated with chunam, and supplied with tusks of real ivory. In its freshness the gleaming ring must have looked magnificent. Only a few of the elephants, of worn brick, with vacant tusk sockets, can now be seen on the north side. It is very difficult to get a photograph of them, as they are always in deepest shade, and two exposures resulted in failure.

The upper platform of Ruanweli is now disfigured by hideous little gim-crack buildings like sugar toys, put up by the priests. In one of them, painted out of recognition, and with all

their charm gone, are the rescued statues of the king and the Buddhas above mentioned. Opposite the south altar, stately in its blackened and worn stone, is the statue of another king, supposed to be Bhatikabhaya (19 B.C.), who alone of all laymen was allowed, on account of his sanctity, to penetrate into the relic-chamber. Major Forbes gives another account, saying that the king wore holes in the pavement with his knees by his continued prayers that he might obtain entrance to the relic-chamber, so that, at last the gods showed him an underground and secret way. The entrance to this, covered by a stone slab at a considerable distance from the outer enclosure of the dagaba, was pointed out to Major Forbes by a priest who greatly desired to obtain his favour. This same priest, however, on subsequent occasions denied all knowledge of such an entrance, nor could it again be found.

How long has this mighty dagaba stood in its present position, and who was responsible for building it? We learn all about that in the Mahawansa. It was the conception of the great King Dutugemunu, and he determined, as in the case of the Brazen Palace, that the labour should be paid for.

When the question of the shape of the great stupa was under discussion, the king asked the bricklayer what he suggested. "The bricklayer, filling a golden dish with water, and taking some water on the palm of his hand, dashed it against the water (in the dish); a great globule in the form of a coral bead rose to the surface, and he said, 'I will construct it in this form.'"

The foundations were solidly laid, for round stones were brought and well beaten in, and then trampled further by elephants wearing leathern pads on their feet. Many surreptitious attempts were made by monks and others to contribute unpaid labour in the form of a brick or handful of earth, so as to gain merit, but when discovered they were always defeated, generally by payment of the doer, which destroyed his "merit," for the king was determined the great monument should be made by paid labour only.

There was a tremendous ceremony at the deposition of the relics in Ruanweli, which included the largest and most important collection of relics ever enshrined together in one place. Hence the peculiar sacredness of Ruanweli. At the ceremony bands played and flowers and incense were offered, and the people assembled in glad thousands, for then, as now, they loved a *pinkama*. The king gave the priesthood "robes, cane-sugar, buffalo butter," and many other things.

When the sacred relics had been enshrined in a receptacle of great magnificence, the king deposited also all the regal ornaments he had on his person, then the priests closed the receptacle with a stone, after which the people were allowed to put any relics they wished on the top of the shrine. Ruanweli is not the largest of the Anuradhapura dagabas, coming third in size. The height of the drum, or body, at the present day is 178 feet 8 inches. It is capped by a modern copper spire.

When the construction of the spire and the plastering of the dagaba alone remained to be completed, the king became very ill. Sending

for his brother Tissa, he told him to finish the mighty work. The prince wanted to show his brother what the dagaba would look like when finished, so he had a case made of white cloth and fixed it on a temporary bamboo frame in the shape the dagaba would eventually assume. Then he told the king that the work was finished.

And the king, who knew by this time that he was dying, was carried to gaze on Ruanweli and the Brazen Palace, and he looked long and earnestly, first at one and then the other of his most mighty works, from a spot where he had a full view of both, and "was filled with joy." He sent for the great warrior Theraputtabhaya, who had fought twenty-eight pitched battles by his side, and among other things said to him, "Now, single-handed I have commenced my conflict with death." Then, according to the cheerful Buddhist custom, all the good deeds of the dying king were recited, among them that he had "maintained at eighteen different places hospitals provided with suitable diet and medicines prepared by medical practitioners for the infirm." And with his eyes fixed on Ruanweli he died in the year 137 B.C. after a reign of twenty-four years. The very stone on which he lay when dying, a straight, tomb-like slab, is still pointed out on the east of the Pilgrims' Road, abreast of Ruanweli. It may be so. From this place both the Brazen Palace and the great dagaba could be seen in turn. The king turned on his "left side" to look at the one and on his "right side" to look at the other, and the positions correspond. With monuments of equal antiquity and undoubted authenticity

still *in situ*, who is to say that this is not probable?

Of King Bhatikabhaya (19 B.C.), who penetrated to the relic-chamber, we are told: "This ruler of men, remitting the taxes due to himself, caused to be planted within the space of one yojana[1] environing the town, the small and large jessamine plants." With these he festooned Ruanweli, "from the pedestal ledge to the pinnacle, with fragrant garlands four inches thick," and, having stuck flowers in between, he made the whole one immense bouquet. It is said also that he covered the stupa with a paste made of red lead and stuck the flowers in by their stalks so as to preserve them.

A line drawn northward across the beautiful park-like space would connect Ruanweli with Thuparama, which can be seen gleaming in the distance, much smaller, and resembling in its shape the bell-shaped pagodas of Burma. All round this space, which is not large in extent, runs a road known as the Inner Circular Road. To the west of Ruanweli is a most beautiful vihara, raised, as all were, on a platform, and approached by a moonstone and carved steps.

The moonstones of Ceylon are unique; in no other country in the world are they found in this shape and style. In whose fertile brain they first originated it is not known, but it must have been a native of the island, for though many details

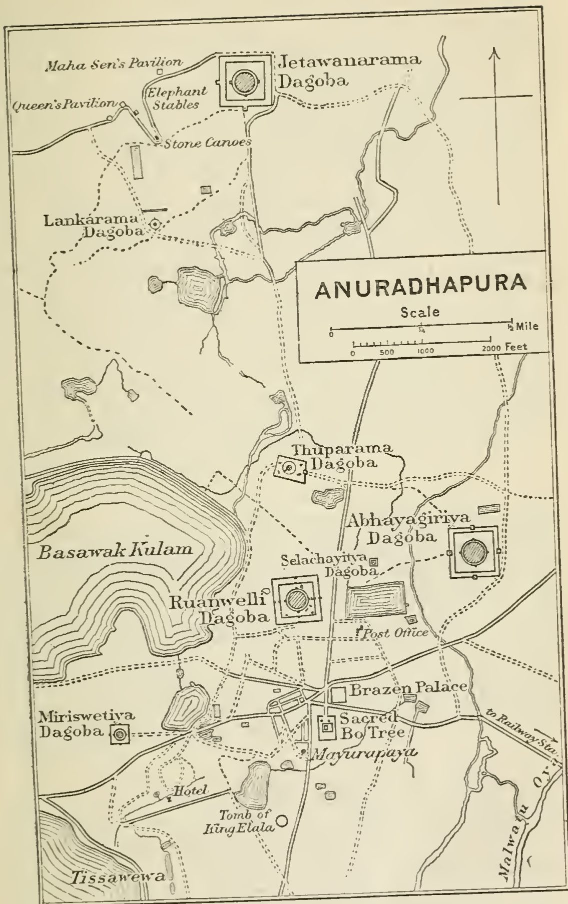
[1] The length of a yojana has been variously estimated, but Mr. H. Parker (*Ancient Ceylon*, Luzac, 1909), an excellent authority, puts it at about 8½ miles, which is not actually a measured length, but "probably the length ascertained by the time in walking from one place to another."

of architecture were borrowed from India and influenced by Indian thought, the only representative of these stones in India is a poor thing without the peculiar animal symbols which are a feature of the Cingalese type. It is unfortunate that these stones are known by the same name as the milky-blue jewel, also found only in Ceylon, because much confusion has resulted, though the two bear no relation whatever to each other. The architectural moonstones are semi-circular slabs of stone, set at the foot of a flight of entrance steps, and wonderfully carved. To the fact that most of those who passed over them went barefoot we probably owe the fact of their wonderful preservation. The stone is divided into concentric rings, first and outermost a narrow, conventional design, then a wider band in which a procession of animals—elephant, horse, lion, and bullock—follow one another round; there are two complete sets of these animals, and the elephant being thrice repeated, beginning and ending the procession, makes nine figures in all. The elephants are excellently executed, full of fire and life, and differing from each other in detail. The bullocks are not bad, but the horses are poor and the lions almost grotesque. The artist must have seen horses, lions he can never have seen, but it is odd that the lion should figure so prominently in Cingalese tradition and carving, when the living animal is in no way associated with the country, and, so far as we know, never has been.

Inside the animal frieze of the moonstone is another floral scroll of artistic design, and within

that again a row of hansas, or sacred geese, while the centre of the stone is occupied by the half of a conventional lotus flower. There are several other points to notice. The outside edge of the block at the extreme points is left uncut to show it was hewn from solid rock. The artist evidently began the work from left to right; in the middle the geese, who are carrying the lotus flowers, grow large, but, as he has not calculated his space correctly, he is left at the end with a bit not big enough for a whole goose and has had to fill in with an extra spray of flower. This is still more clearly shown in the moonstones of the viharas lying between this and Thuparama, almost due north, where the last goose is ingeniously twisting itself backwards to fit into the curtailed space. Small divergencies, due to individual handiwork, can be noted in all these stones. In one the animals are much poorer. In another the geese are larger and their heads overlap the rim. In one they carry lotus flowers in their beaks, and in another not. But the most curious point is that at Anuradhapura all the stones of this kind yet discovered, with one exception, have a procession of mixed animals (always in the same order). The exception is one stone at the Bo-tree where lions are omitted. At Polonnaruwa (of later date) the stones almost invariably are decorated by a row of elephants and then a row of horses. By far the finest moonstone at Anuradhapura is that at the so-called King's Palace, which is three feet more in diameter than any other (see p. 102).

It has been surmised that these particular four


ANURADHAPURA
Scale
0
¼
½ Mile
0
500
1000
2000 Feet
Jetawanarama Dagoba
Maha Sen's Pavilion
Elephant Stables
Queen's Pavilion
Stone Canoes
Lankarama Dagoba
Thuparama Dagoba
Abhayagiriya Dagoba
Basawak Kulam
Selachayitya Dagoba
Ruanwelli Dagoba
Post Office
Brazen Palace
Miriswetiya Dagoba
Sacred Bo Tree
Mayurapaya
to Railway Sta.
Hotel
Tomb of King Elala
Malwatu Oya
Tissawewa

beasts found on moonstones had something to do with the four cardinal points (see p. 139). That they had some significance is certain. Fa Hien, a Chinese monk who visited India and Ceylon about A.D. 400, mentions having heard of a temple in India built of five storeys, decorated with "elephant figures, lion shapes, horse shapes, ox shapes, and dove shapes," the last of which may have been intended for the sacred geese. The selection of animals coinciding with those on these moonstones is at least suggestive. In speaking of the temple at Halebid in South India, Fergusson refers to the Chinese pilgrim's description, and says that in the temple also there were animal friezes in this order, elephants, lions, horses, a conventional beast replacing the oxen, and a "bird of a species that would puzzle a naturalist." He adds:

"The succession, however, is the same, and the same five genera of living things form the ornaments of the 'moonstone' thresholds of the various monuments in Ceylon. Sometimes in modern Hindu temples only two or three animal friezes are found, but the succession is always the same. . . . When we know the cause of it, it seems as if this curious selection and succession might lead to some very suggestive conclusions."

The little dwarfs called *ganas*, or children of Ganesh, can be seen on the "risers" of the stairs at the vihara, and the carving on the balustrades should also be noted. These entrance stairs almost invariably follow one pattern. By far the finest example at Anuradhapura is that at a little

vihara across the Inner Circular Road westward, slightly to the south, easily to be found. Here the delicacy of the carving is an inexhaustible marvel (see p. 65).

We see the curious scroll-balustrade issuing from the mouth of a *makara,* a kind of fabulous beast, half-dragon, half-crocodile, and running down, carved in a pattern like the finest lace-work, to a cushion, while in the panel enclosed by it on the outside is a heraldic lion with up-raised paw. Note the sharpness of the lion's teeth and the crocodile's claws. And this was executed somewhere about two thousand years ago, whereas in England the stone work of our most ancient cathedrals cannot boast more than half those years!

The makara motif is also used in Indian architecture, and spoken of as a "dolphin," or shark.

"The 'makara,' a fabulous fish or shark very often depicted with a curling trunk like an elephant, cunningly incorporated with conventional foliage, is found in a thousand different forms on the buildings of Nepal. . . . The makara is said to be the vehicle of Varuna, the God of the Ocean, and is also borne on the banner of the God of Love. It represents the sign of Capricornus in the Hindu zodiac, and is a feature of Asiatic art in all countries and all ages. . . . The naga, the hansa (goose), the kirti muka, and scores of other forms in Oriental art all have their own deep meaning and attractive story, an investigation of which, like the makara, would open up an interesting and illuminating field of research." [1]

[1] *Picturesque Nepal,* by Percy Brown. (A. & C. Black. 1912.)

The naga and hansa are met with at every turn in Ceylon and seen in many guises.

The moonstone of this little vihara is undecorated save for the central half-lotus. It is a pity that the artist who executed the upper carvings did not find time to do that too. Perhaps he planned it and died before execution, and so we lost what might have been the most delicately dainty moonstone of them all.

Passing on north up the Inner Circular Road, with Basawak Kulam on the left, we come to a green hillock with the remains of ruins on the summit and among them a *yantra gala*, a square stone with holes in it (see p. 114).

To sit on the summit of this hillock and absorb the beauty and strangeness of the surroundings is an occupation that can never pall. Across the wide park-like spaces of grass, beneath the shady rain-trees, herds of cattle are driven to the feeding grounds around the tank. Black and very dark brown are most of them, but some have the fawn-coloured tint of a Jersey. They are followed by tiny calves, not so big as the great goats of the country, which represent "mutton" in a district where sheep cannot live. The herdsmen of the poorer class are clad in dust-coloured rags, with sometimes a twist of red stuff around the head. But here in Anuradhapura, where races are so mixed, headgear is very varied; the Cingalese, as a rule, wear nothing but their own abundant locks, unless they throw a cloth around to keep off exceptionally bright sun. Chignons are not entirely out of fashion for men, but those who have come under European influence often

crop their thick hair. Every imaginable garment makes its appearance. In this pure atmosphere things keep clean for a long time, and a great deal of white is worn, supplemented by gay pinks, greens, blues, and reds, for the Cingalee does not share the prejudice of the Burman against blues and greens. Probably that is because he knows instinctively his dark colouring is not turned sallow by the contact, as is the honey-coloured skin of the Burman.

On one side are the clerks belonging to the Kachcheri in spotless European suits of white drill; on the other is the gentleman who dresses in nothing but a skirt, possibly supplemented by a vivid-coloured scarf over his well-formed shoulders.

Differing a little from him is the man who completes the skirt by a European vest or shirt, the latter of course worn outside, making a most convenient garment. The people of Ceylon have as a whole good manners; the Cingalese are gentle and polite, they stare little, and you hear no loud laughs after you have passed, best of all, there is very little touting or pestering. May it be long before they are ruined by the indiscretion of tourists, and become a nation of touts! There are few places in the East where you can sit at peace in a great shady park-like space in the midst of antiquities dating from B.C. unworried by "guides," without any one even to cast an intrusive glance.

A little bay on Basawak Kulam is a favourite haunt with those who prefer mixed bathing, and probably find pure drinking water insipid. Here, close inshore, they are safe from crocodiles, even to the fat baby, who stamps with delight as its

mother empties one kerosene tin after another of water over it in a deluge. Basawak Kulam has been identified with the Abhaya tank made about 300 B.C. and has therefore been in existence from the earliest days of Anuradhapura.[1]

A large jay, with wings and tail of metallic blue, has spread himself to get warmed through by the sun on a heap of red earth. The markings on his extended wings are like those on a winged scarab of Egypt. Hideous little scavenger birds, called "The Seven Sisters," in nun-like livery, with thick heads and necks, give out metallic cries.

Such is Anuradhapura as it is at present, and many of the features are the same as about the time of King Dutugemunu. But then it was a thickly populated city, as large as London.

"The city covered an area of 256 square miles. The distance between opposite gates, north and south, was sixteen miles. In one street are eleven thousand houses, many of them being two storeys in height; the smaller streets are innumerable."[2]

Skinner (*Fifty Years in Ceylon*), who, as before-mentioned, visited the place on a road-making expedition in 1832, speaks of the "great north and south street" as "a forest, only defined by the wells, which, centuries ago, supplied the houses with water." The line of some of these streets can still be traced. In them the bright-robed people, with whom were mingled thousands of yellow-robed monks, passed to and fro, while lordly elephants strolled along having passage

[1] *Ancient Ceylon*, by H. Parker. (Luzac, 1909.)

[2] Quoted by Forbes from "an ancient native account."

made for them. Beyond the walls, from a distance, could be seen the golden roofs flashing in the sun against the thrilling blue of the sky. Inside, if it were a festival day, maybe the huge dome of Ruanweli would be one mass of flowers —lotus, orchid, and jasmine—scenting all the air with an almost overpowering odour. There were great parks containing pavilions ; peacocks strolled on the close-clipped grass between the flower-beds, and the vast stretches of mirror-like water were freely used for bathing. Around the bo-tree rose a temple of several storeys, and there, as to-day, were always worshippers, silent, dark-faced, offering flowers and bowing themselves in reverence. Men of the lowest caste hastened along, watering the streets from skins to lay the dust. The grand buildings set among the trees gleamed like marble and were adorned with free bold carving and bands of gold and silver, and inside there were many pillared richly decorated halls, containing possibly thrones of gold and ivory, holding in corners great golden images of Buddha looking out from inscrutable jewelled eyes. And in various parts of this great city were alms-houses where the poor received food ; hospitals where complaints are tended and healed ; and on the outskirts, great cemeteries for the burial of the dead.

A well-known authority gives it as his opinion :

" Anuradhapura was not one city but two, one within the other, and the royal residences and chief monastic edifices and dagabas were enclosed within walls of great strength, and shut in by massive gates, flanked by watch towers and

guard houses. Beyond these limits was the outer city set apart for the lower orders, wherein the business life of the capital was transacted. It consisted mainly of one long, wide street, composed of shops for the sale of every description of goods, and these were divided—as usual in Eastern cities—into quarters for the various callings of provision-dealers, drapers, goldsmiths, artisans, and even to the retailers of children's toys, some of which have been found buried beneath the ruins of buildings. On the outskirts of the lesser city were extensive tracts set apart for the growth of innumerable flowers, solely for the decoration of temples and dagabas and for the ornamentation of the streets on great Buddhist festal days." [1]

An account of Anuradhapura at this time is given in the Mahawansa, in mentioning a visitor who had never been there before.

"Bathing in the Tissa tank, making offerings at the great Bo-tree and the Thuparama dagaba, and for the purpose of seeing the whole capital, entering the town and purchasing aromatic drugs from the bazaars, he departed out of the northern gate, and gathering uppalla flowers from the uppalla-planted marshes, presented himself to the Brahman."

Mr. Parker,[2] who was in the Irrigation Department, puts the southern gate of the Inner City to the north of Thuparama, which was built in the Nandana garden (also called Jotivana) south of the city, while further south still was the Mahamegho garden which contained the Bo-tree.

[1] *Architectural Remains* (Folio), by J. G. Smither, F.R.I.B.A., no date, *circ.* 1890.

[2] *Ancient Ceylon.* (Luzac, 1909.)

The signs and sounds of ancient glory die away, the music of the drums grows dim in our ears, and the flashing of gold and silver vanishes; once more we awake to reality on the hillock in the great peace of the present-time city. Climbing down we may pass on toward Thuparama and continue our investigations. Amid numerous evidences of the former monasteries we presently come to one a little south-west of the dagaba, where the huge balustrade of the entrance stairs is split from top to bottom. This balustrade and its companion are well worth examining. The design is quite unusual. The conventional lion is crammed into a small space and the rest of the stones is divided into small compartments, with various dainty and graceful carvings.

But the gem of the carving is on the right side of the southern stone, and consists in a spirited representation of a fight between a cobra and mongoose, while a monkey, clasping its baby to its breast, looks down from a large-leaved tree. A drawing of this unique carving was made especially for this book by Muhandiram D. A. L. Perera, of the Archæological Survey. This is worth examining in some detail, as such a homely subject is extremely rare. For the position of the stone see Frontispiece.

There are graceful figures of women on the stone to the north, and a drawing in low relief of a house or temple at the inner end of each balustrade. These are some of the very few representations of houses remaining to show us what such buildings were like when complete. The columns exactly resemble those standing about



Drawing by Muhandiram D. A. L. Perera.

COBRA AND MONGOOSE FIGHT.



THE PILLARS OF THUPARAMA.

p. 85

everywhere at the present day, so it is at least likely that the top storeys are faithfully depicted too. Such a building is also occasionally found on a stone used for certain purposes of daily life (see p. 87).

Passing onward again we see to the left a forest of columns, once a house for priests, and to the right the *Dalada Maligawa*, Temple of the Tooth, easily recognised by the odd capitals of its columns (see p. 65).

The Tooth-relic was brought to Ceylon in A.D. 311, long after Dutugemunu's time, by a Brahman princess, but it was lodged in an already existing building of King Tissa, so parts of this ruin may be as old as anything else in the city. The relic was regarded as so peculiarly sacred that it was carried away for safety during the worst Tamil raids. It accompanied the court whenever the king had sufficient power to take it with him, and was lodged at all the various capitals of the kingdom from time to time. Occasionally, when the monks had reason to distrust their monarch's good faith, they, who had access to it, carried it off themselves, until he came to reason. It was not even safe from members of the royal household, for in the time of the great Parakrama it was stolen by his aunt, and he had considerable difficulty in getting it back from her before she carried it off to India. It was stolen and actually taken to India in the fourteenth century, but was restored after the Cingalese monarch himself, Parakrama III, had been over to the mainland to plead for it in person. The story of this, the most sacred relic of all to Buddhists, is a most

enthralling one, and it is a pity it is not accessible in English. The adventures of the Tooth are, indeed, recorded in Elu, the classical language of the Cingalese, in the Dhatuwansa, a work mentioned in the Mahawansa and still extant, but even in translation the style of this would not appeal to English readers. From golden caskets set with jewels, raised above bowing, swaying, adoring multitudes, to the hair of a princess's head or the saffron folds of a priest's robe as places of hurried concealment, the story runs. From temples of granite, decorated with gold and silver, to windy caves on bare hillsides and holes in the depths of jungles the Tooth has wandered. It is said to have been rescued from the funeral pyre of Buddha by Khema the sage, and eventually brought to Ceylon concealed in the hair of the princess, who was of Kalinga lineage, a race that gave more than one king to Ceylon. The feat must have been difficult, for the fantastic size of this much-prized relic robs it in unprejudiced eyes of any possible claim to be what it represents to be, though its great age and the reverence bestowed upon it invest it with peculiar interest. The tooth is very seldom seen indeed by Europeans. It is enclosed in many caskets and guarded at Kandy, where it is carried in procession every year at the great festival or Perahera, which now takes place in August. But though the original cannot be seen, there is a model in Colombo museum, which shows exactly what it is like. It is held up by a wire, which encircles it and springs from the heart of a lotus-flower after the usual fashion for such relics in Burma as well as Ceylon. The tooth

is about two inches in length, and the thickness and shape of a man's little finger, and if a tooth at all, is possibly the fossil one of some animal. Just such a shape, though a little smaller, is the precious "tooth-relic" in the Queen's Monastery, Mandalay, which I myself have seen. Whatever the original relic of Ceylon may have been, the truth about the present one cannot be doubtful. It is said by one account that the Portuguese destroyed the genuine relic in their raid on Kandy in 1560, and that the loss was concealed and denied by the monks, who substituted the present relic. It may be so, for there is no inherent impossibility in the fact of the genuine relic having been brought over to the island originally, though, in that case, it is at least strange that those clever monks did not model the new tooth on the old, and make it of some shape that might possibly once have been found in a human mouth.

The natural scepticism felt by the West toward all such relics must, however, be discounted, when just recently (1916) Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology in India, whose testimony cannot be gainsaid, has found, at the ancient city of Taxila, twenty-five miles north-west of Rawal Pindi, the third set of the relics distributed after Buddha's death. The account of that event, usually accepted by Buddhists, tells that when the flesh had been consumed on the funeral pyre, but before the bones had been destroyed, a heavy shower of rain fell and put the fire out. Thereupon much discussion arose as to the custody of the remains. It was eventually agreed that they should be divided into eight lots and distributed

widely, so that cairns, or dagabas, might be raised over them. This was done. Two of such sets have already been unearthed, one at Piprava in the Terai in 1898, one at Kanishka near Peshawar in 1914, and now the third set has been unearthed with an inscription, proving, at any rate, what it was supposed to be. The curious feature of this find is that Sir John Marshall was led to the spot by following the account given by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang, of his visit to Taxila in the seventh century.

There is comparatively little said in the Chronicles about the advent of the Tooth at Anuradhapura, as compared with the account of the advent of the Bo-tree, or the Collar-bone, the two other of the city's most precious relics. Yet of the three the Tooth is now regarded more as the actual core and centre of the Buddhist community than even the Bo-tree itself.

The inner shrine of the *Dalada Maligawa*, in which this relic was probably bestowed, is the one in which appear the very curiously crowned columns already alluded to. The open "lanterns" of these are supposed to represent a tooth; if they represent anything, it is a hollow double tooth, which, in this case, is not appropriate. They cannot be said to be nearly as graceful as the usual style of capital found here, and "curious" is the only word that can fitly be applied to them. The entrance to the outer building shows a fine moonstone, and balustrades or wings of the most common type.

Close to the ruined temple is the white dome of Thuparama, held to be of great sacredness as the

original receptacle of the sacred "Collar-bone." The shell of the present building is, as a matter of fact, quite modern, and of an altogether different shape from the original one, but it encloses a core of great antiquity described by Mr. Fergusson as being "older, or at least as old, as anything now existing on the continent of India." A wood-cut in his widely known book, *The History of Indian Architecture*, gives a view of the dagaba as it appeared in 1870, when it was purely of the pudding-basin type like the larger dagabas, but on a very small scale. The original work is enclosed in the present graceful dome, which is the shape of a bell. This springs from a circular platform, reached from the ground by a fairly steep flight of steps. The bell at its base is 40 feet, 6 inches in diameter. It is capped by a circular spire tipped with two crystals. From pavement to crystals is 63 feet (J. G. Smither). The chief beauty of Thuparama, however, is found in its slender columns, some of a great height, which spring from the platform encircling it. There are four rows of these, varying from 14 feet to nearly 23 feet in height: Each of the carved capitals in the first three rows is made from a separate stone and fitted on to the shaft with a socket. They are finely decorated like those at Lankarama (see p. 90). The original number of pillars was 176 and of these 42 are missing. The use of these pillars has been often questioned. It is hardly possible to suppose they supported a roof, as any such roof would not be tall enough to enclose the dagaba itself. In the Mahawansa it is mentioned that great coloured pictures, representative of scenes in the

life of Buddha, were carried in festival processions. It may possibly be that these pictures were suspended from the posts like screens. However, the posts may have been merely used to support garlands of flowers strung from one to the other.

The dagaba was constructed in the reign of King Tissa (307–267 B.C.), and in it was installed the Collar-bone relic. A long account is given of the ceremony. The relic was placed on the back of the state elephant, whereupon "the delighted elephant roared." The dagaba itself consumed in the building "thousands of bricks," and among them a receptacle was excavated for the relic. Close by the king then built a vihara, or temple. The Mahawansa also tells us that before the building of the dagaba the site was "overrun with the thorns called Kadambo."

In the reign of many kings the decoration of Thuparama occupied a prominent place. Agghabodi VI (A.D. 741)[1] made for it a "cover of gold ornamented with bands of silver set at distances." Udaya (A.D. 901)[1] "covered Thuparama with a band of gold." Sena IV (A.D. 972)[1] "made a door of pure gold for the relic house at Thuparama." It was treasure of this kind which repaid the Tamils for coming over to the island and raiding it.

At the foot of the long flight of steps leading up to the platform is a great cistern, hewn out of a block of stone, and about a hundred yards eastward across the road is a similar, but larger one. This, the natives say, with that in-

[1] These dates are taken from Mr. Wijesinha's version of the Mahawansa.

genuity in detail which characterises them, was the "drinking-trough of King Dutugemunu's state elephant." East-north-east of Thuparama at the corner of the Y Road going north is a small dagaba which is traditionally called "Sanghamitta's Tomb," after the princess-missionary who brought the Bo-tree branch to Ceylon.

We may return from Thuparama by the eastern section of the Inner Circular Road, which is mainly formed by the Sacred Road running north from the Bo-tree. The first object noticed is the modern hospital, successor to so many far back in the ages. If we could only have seen them and studied their methods, what quaint superstitions and customs we might have discovered. So many times are hospitals mentioned among the works of merit of the ancient kings that an elaboration of them would become tedious. Among them Kasyapa IV (A.D. 912) built hospitals both here and at Polonnaruwa "for the prevention of pestilential diseases," and not only so, but "dispensaries for medicine."

Passing on down the road till we come almost abreast of Ruanweli, we see the slab where King Dutugemunu is supposed to have lain dying. At the back of the little platform on which it stands is one of the curious stones, already referred to, where the representation of a house is carved. This house stands on open columns with three storeys in the centre and two at each side. Mr. Still says :

"By this stone of humble purpose we are given a clue to the form of the buildings before

the superstructure all collapsed. I consider this stone to be one of the most interesting in the City."

He did not know of a much more elaborate specimen, since discovered near the Outer Circular Road (see p. 130).

A little further south, still beside the road, is one of the curiously shaped "medicine-boats," or sarcophagi, of which three are known at Anuradhapura; in this the rude outline of a human being is hollowed out of the stone. Down a side road to the left is the post office, formerly the rest-house, and beside it are the ruins of a large *mahapali*, or alms-hall, which is generally supposed to be that built by King Tissa II in the first century B.C. It was burnt down and reconstructed by Mahinda IV at the end of the tenth century A.D.

The most interesting feature remaining is the very perfect specimen of a stone boat or canoe lying along the east side. It is 44 feet 3 inches in length. There is no doubt as to the use of these great boats, they are distinctly described in the Mahawansa as a "receptacle shaped like a boat to hold rice," and are always found in connection with alms-halls. Usually there are two, a larger and smaller, standing at right angles to each other, but here there is only one remaining. This *mahapali* is noted in the records of many kings. When Silameghavana (A.D. 614) had killed his predecessor, he "entered the beautiful city of Anuradhapura, . . . and when he had saluted the Order and the Bodhi, he rendered the honours

that were due to the three thupas, and patronised the alms-hall. In a time of great scarcity he distributed milk-rice among the Order, mixed with ghee and honey, and supplied the monks with water-strainers also. He gave largely to the beggar, the wayfarer, and the mendicant, and by divers acts of charity gained their love. And being kind-hearted by nature, he even gave away cake-money among the children."

In the centre of the mahapali there is a floral altar with representation of the prints of Buddha's feet.

North of the post office, bounded by the Inner Circular Road on one side and by Abhayagiriya on the other, is a tract of ground crossed by numerous paths, but apt to be swampy and not altogether desirable unless the way is carefully chosen. In it lies Selchaitiya dagaba, now a small shapeless mound, with a few carved stones. It is still visited by pilgrims, as the little flags and blackened altars testify. It was built by King Lajji Tissa (119 B.C.), and has a reputation for sacredness.

The Inner Circular Road leads back to the bazaar, and to reach the hotel there are other roads below Ruanweli which can be taken if preferred.

CHAPTER IV

LANKARAMA DISTRICT: A WORLD OF MONKS

STARTING from Thuparama, a long road runs northward and finally bifurcates, one branch going to Jetawanarama and the other to Lankarama and neighbourhood. This is appropriately named the Y Road. The first part of it is not interesting; it is lined by plantain plantations and the only ruin is a small Hindu temple about half-way up on the west.

By the western branch Lankarama is soon reached. This small dilapidated dagaba is surrounded by tall slender pillars much like those of Thuparama, but only in three circles. They vary from 12 feet to 16 feet 8 inches in height. If they are examined, they will be seen to be all carved in one block, capital and column hewn together. A line of decoration runs round the head of the shaft, in the form of a looped and tasselled design, falling to a depth of 6 or 8 inches, and varying a little so as to become in some cases exactly like a fleur-de-lys. Above this rise the capitals showing bands of jovial little dwarfs or quaint lions. Palms and a temple-tree spring from the platform, finding root-hold between the granite blocks, and though destructive of the stonework, they certainly add to the picture as a picture.

"The dagaba, one of the Eight Sacred sites, has for years been allowed to remain in a dilapidated state, completely ruined on the north side where it has collapsed, without any effort on the part of the Buddhists to restore it, though such restoration would involve little expense and no technical difficulty" (1910–11 *Report*).

The real name of the dagaba is not known, but its sanctity and the fact that it so closely resembles Thuparama lead to the conclusion that it is one of the older buildings of the city.

All around, in its neighbourhood, are the remains of monasteries, besides several headless sedent Buddhas. A very little way beyond Lankarama, on the other side of the road, are many ruins well worth examining. The road curves a little, and just beyond the curve crosses a deep channel known in Cingalese as an *ela*, which is dry. At this point it is advisable, if driving, to leave any vehicle and send it on to wait at the junction of the Y Road and Outer Circular Road, and then on foot to plunge across the intervening strip of woodland.

Facing the road, plainly in view, are the remains of a large vihara, with well-preserved moulded platform, and a distinguishing mark in two immense upright stone slabs which flank the entrance. Here, what Mr. Bell has aptly described as the "five-of-cards" pattern common to so many of these monasteries may very readily be discerned. It is composed of a central temple or shrine in the middle of an open space, with four small shrines in the corners. The central shrine is usually a *pilimagé*, or image-house, and

the four smaller ones may be defined as chapels. These are all enclosed by the inner wall of the monastery, and outside lie the *piriven*, or monks' cells, more or less in number according to the size of the monastery; sometimes there is also a *pansala*, or refectory, and almost invariably a tank for water supply, with possibly small pokuna for use as rock-hewn baths or cisterns. There may also be in some monasteries a dagaba, and very often a "street," or what was once a covered verandah leading up to a porch. Here and there special distinctive features are found, such as, in this case, these curious upright slabs of stone, which are not quite like anything found elsewhere.

Facing this vihara, a little to the left and behind it, is a low hummock of rock, on the top of which are several incised drawings, a man fighting, an elephant, and some diagrams that look like geometrical illustrations, but may be maps (see p. 120). About an equal distance north of the vihara is a great mound or lump of earth built partly up with brick. This is not a dagaba.

"As there are no further clues to fix the object this commanding building served, it can only be surmised that it was the Priory or Chief Pansala for one or both monasteries, or possibly a House of Meditation common to the whole Sangharama in these western quarters." (1911–12 *Report*.)

At the back of it, behind another outcrop of rock, is a deeply cut bath with a little dressing-room.

To wander through these woods in the early morning, hearing the deep throaty song of birds and the soft coo of the wood pigeon is pleasant enough. The undergrowth is so cleared as to make walking easy, and the ground is softened by the thick leaves of a little plant resembling wood anemone. The curious rock hummocks add mystery to the scene, suggesting witches and gnomes and dwarfs; the innumerable ruins and bits of carving gleaming in the sunlight or flecked by shadow carry the mind back into the romance of history. Troops of monkeys disturbed in feeding glide up tree-trunks like wraiths. You turn, thinking they are all gone, but there are always a few more vanishing into space! Away to the west are two great tanks, of the pattern generally found in the vicinity of any large monastery. Many outlying ruins claim attention, and in the midst is the straight "street," or alley, a characteristic feature of many of the monasteries, with the entrance porch still standing, facing the Outer Circular Road. Parallel with this alley lies the chief rock hummock, like the back of a stranded whale. It is called *Gal-gé*, "stone-house," for beneath its shadow, uncountable years ago, a solitary monk lived. Just outside the doorway of the hermit's cave in the west side, when I saw it, great bushes of the *cassia alata* were in flower. The picture lacked no touch to perfect it. The royal orange-red blossoms crowned the feathery fronds, rearing themselves against the black rock. The door-posts and lintel stand square beneath the curve of the overhanging rock, and an immense tree with its roots tightly

clamped to the bare surface of the granite, throws down a deep shade. A cursory glance shows that the little apartment was once provided with a facing wall on each side of the door and was divided into three cells. Clear of the plants, a rock-cut bath or cistern, not twenty yards away, shows whence the necessary supply of water was drawn.

It is impossible to imagine anything more peaceful and remote than this little cell nestling in the shadow of the rocks. These rock dwellings seem to have exercised a great fascination on the monkish mind; all over they are found, the best specimens in this neighbourhood being here, and at Vessagiriya three miles southward, where there is an almost exactly similar lintel (see p. 126). Gal-gé "is the longest and most northerly of these rock hummocks, very similar in shape, and of little width, which all rise sharply and stretch out as part of that ridge outcrop, the line of which (continued intermittently north and for miles southward) may be followed through Basawakkulam Tank and the Mirisaveti rocks." (1911–12 *Report.*)

Passing round the end of Gal-gé, and continuing beside a small portico to the road, we see that its outer wall is decorated by a frieze of elephants in relief, somewhat in the same style as that encompassing the platform at Ruanweli. Just behind it is a small vihara, of which the chief point to notice is that the guard-stones have a carved canopy like that at the Elephant Stables, and Nakha vehera (pp. 96, 110).

At the junction of the Y Road and Outer Circular Road are twin ponds, called the *Tammet-*

tan Pokuna, or "pair of kettle-drums," but before reaching these we pass an angle of the "Elephant Pokuna" which almost touches the Y Road. It is so called, not because it had anything to do with elephants, but because it was of exceptional size. It is melancholy enough now, with the huge blocks that once lined its sides falling away, and the bare branches of dead trees stretching over it, to the delight of many brilliant-hued kingfishers. From this point we can drive on, and turning right, in the Outer Circular Road, soon pass on the left a small and dilapidated dagaba called, without any apparent cause, Dutugemunu's Tomb.

This road was designed simply to show the ruins, and so twists around all the most interesting points. On the left, on raised ground, is the so-called Queen's Palace, to which the ascent is easy. It exhibits the usual characteristics, and was undoubtedly a monastery and no "palace." Then the road passes a seated Buddha much mutilated, and loops right round in a horse-shoe. At the furthest point of the bend are two stone canoes, one large and one smaller, at right angles to each other. As already noted, this is the relative position in which they are usually found, and it has been facetiously suggested, that if the larger one was for rice, then the smaller one was for curry, jaggery, honey, or whatever was used to flavour it.

Quite near is "Burrows' Canopy," so called because restored by Mr. Burrows, C.C.S., in 1885. It consists of a roof with a beautifully moulded ceiling, standing on columns. The stones composing it were found detached and buried, and

were put together in position with considerable difficulty.

Dipping up again, the road comes to the so-called "Elephant Stables," a name as remote from actuality as the Elephant Pokuna. On an immense platform stand some columns of a most unusual height and size, only matched in Anuradhapura by those near Mirisaveti Dagaba (see p. 117).

Beside the steps stands the most wonderful *dwarpal*, or guard-stone, yet unearthed. This magnificent bit of sculpture stands 5 feet high, and is capped by a carved *torana*, or canopy, a most unusual feature in such stones, but, as we have just seen, not unique. On the outer side is a small elephant, and the central figure is most perfectly designed, and finished with a profusion of detail. The "guard" is the same in general outlines for all this type of stones, but the exact meaning of the symbolism is not known. He has one, or sometimes two, small *ganas* in attendance, and is always represented under a "serpent-hood" of a many-hooded *naga*, or cobra. In this case, the flesh is depicted with a reality unseen elsewhere. The stone owes its unusually excellent preservation to the fact that it was found lying face downward in the earth. Occasionally a dwarf takes the place of this singularly graceful figure, and in one or two instances the stones are plain or sculped with a floral ornament.

The most interesting fact in connection with this area is that from inscriptions discovered near the stone canoes, and at the "Elephant Stables," it has been rendered almost certain that the two great dagabas Abhayagiri and Jetawanarama bear



THE GUARD-STONE AT THE SO-CALLED "ELEPHANT STABLES."



ONE OF THE TWIN POKUNAS.

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each other's names, though when and how this curious transposition occurred is not known. It would be of course impossible to change them back again now, owing to the confusion that would result in identifying literary references, but any one really interested in these matters must remember that historical references to the one in the chronicles, in reality belong to the other. The mistake was for long suspected by Mr. H. C. P. Bell, Archæological Commissioner for five-and-twenty years. In his 1910–11 *Report* he says in a note:

"To the late Mr. H. Nevill, Ceylon Civil Service, belongs the real credit for first urging, more than twenty years ago, that the names of the Abhayagiri and Jetawanarama dagabas had been wrongly transposed in the course of centuries."

The two slabs near the stone canoes are of the date of Mahinda IV and refer to gifts and regulations made to the Abhayagiri vihara lying west of Abhayagiri dagaba. The great edifice known as *Ratana-maha-pasada (Pali)* was built here by King Kanittha Tissa (A.D. 229–247)[1] and later rebuilt with great magnificence by Mahinda II at a cost of 300,000 pieces of gold. This building, for various reasons which need not be gone into here, has been practically identified with that known now as the "Elephant Stables." The evidence already available on the subject of the identity of the dagabas was reinforced by the discovery by Mr. Bell of an inscription on a stone slab now forming one of the flag-stones of the

[1] Date given by Mr. Wickremasinghe.

pavement at the south altar of Jetawanarama recording repairs and grants of King Malu Tissa (who has been identified with Kanittha Tissa) for the maintenance of the Abhayagiri vihara and its monks. As it is obviously unlikely that such a slab would have been laid at any dagaba but that to which it referred, this is very strong confirmatory evidence. A full account of these three slabs and their inscriptions can be found in *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, edited and translated by Don Martino de Z. Wickremasinghe (Vol. I, Part VI, 1912, Oxfd. Univ. Press).

The most interesting bit of translation is perhaps that from the second slab of Mahinda IV mentioned above :

"(The income of) the villages set apart for repairs (of buildings) shall not be devoted to (the provision of) food and raiment (to monks) but shall be utilised for repairs.

"When there are no villages set apart for repairs, the surplus (of the revenue) that remains after providing food and raiment according to ancient usage, shall be spent on repairs. The wardens who have not acted in this manner shall be sent away from residence" (*Ibid.*).

This interesting passage shows both the minuteness and strictness of the regulations governing the conduct of monks. But if any further evidence on the point is needed, we find it in the travels of the Chinese monk, Fa-Hien.[1]

He was a native of Wu-yang in Shansi, and undertook a journey to India in search of complete

[1] Fa-Hien, by James Legge. 1886.

copies of the sacred book, the Vinaya pitaka, about A.D. 400.

He started from Changan, Shansi, west of Nanking, to which he eventually returned.

After wandering through Central Asia and losing his companions—one by death from exposure and others who turned back—he got over the Himalayas into India and visited all the scenes of Buddha's lifetime. Then he left the mouth of the Hugli and took a boat to Ceylon. He believed firmly in the legend of Buddha's visit to Ceylon.

"When Buddha came to this country, wishing to transform the wicked nagas, by his supernatural power, he planted one foot at the north of the royal city [Anuradhapura] and the other on the top of a mountain [Adam's Peak].

. . . . .

"Over the footprint at the north of the city the king built a large tope, 400 cubits high, grandly adorned with gold and silver. By the side of the tope he further built a monastery called the Abhayagiri, where there are now 5,000 monks. There is in it a hall of Buddha adorned with carved and inlaid work of gold and silver, and rich in the seven precious substances, in which there is an image (of Buddha) in green jade, more than 20 cubits in height and glittering all over and having an appearance of solemn dignity which words cannot express. In the palm of the right hand there is a priceless pearl."

As the so-called Abhayagiri dagaba is due *east* of the city and Jetawanarama due *north*, it is plain that the conjecture of experts is right, and that

at some time in the past confusion has arisen and the names have been transposed.

Mr. Parker [1] surmises that the misnaming may date from the twelfth century, when the men sent by Parakrama the Great to restore the dagabas found them practically abandoned, "and because of the great heaps of bricks and clay and the thickets of the forest, no man was able to have access thereto" (Mahawansa).

The whole of Fa-Hien's book is worth reading; for though it is written in the third person with the exception of a few sentences at the end, it conveys throughout a sense of personal description which has kept it alive until the present time.

One rather pathetic touch is that one day when Fa-Hien, sitting by the image he describes, saw a merchant offering a fan of white silk which carried him back at a bound to his native land, "the tears of sorrow involuntarily filled his eyes and fell down." It was years since he had seen his country, all those who had started with him had died or left him, and he was overcome by a wave of home-sickness. He was away altogether fifteen years, and his journey was a miracle of fortitude and adaptability.

He gives in detail the ceremony by which the tooth of Buddha was brought forth and taken to Abhayagiriya for ninety days. Great coloured figures to the number of 500, showing Buddha in his 500 bodily forms, lined both sides of the road. These may have been the paintings, which some conjecture to have been hung on the pillars surrounding the dagabas.

[1] *Ancient Ceylon.* (Luzac, 1909.)

Before going on to the so-called Jetawanarama dagaba itself, there are other things to see nearer at hand. There is in fact a choice of two ways and on both are objects of interest. The carriage-road, a continuation of the Outer Circular, which comes out at the back of the dagaba, and another a rough cart-road (feasible for most vehicles with care) starts from close by the stone canoes and goes off at right angles, ending up in front of the great dagaba.

By penetrating along this for a little distance a blackened sedent Buddha is passed. It is curious to note how very much more common this type is than either the standing or lying Buddha. I remember seeing only one of the former class at Anuradhapura, a very small and mutilated one at Vijayarama. The three positions denote: Buddha in meditation under the Bo-tree, as he was when he received revelation; Buddha preaching to enlighten others; and Buddha as he was when he attained Nirvana. In the Burmese representations of the seated Buddha, almost invariably the left hand lies in the lap and the right falls downwards over the knee; but in the Cingalese type both hands usually rest together in the lap. Where the statue has been mutilated, as in this case, it is not easy to judge of its original attitude.

By plunging into the jungle abreast of this figure the central block of a most beautiful vihara can be quickly seen. The steps and guards are unusually perfect. "The granite staircase of this viharé for completeness and rare beauty is, in its own line, the gem of Anuradhapura art and sculp-

ture." (1911 *Report.*) The guard-stones are at least four inches higher than that remaining at the elephant stables, but they are without a sculptured torana. The steps are well decorated, and at the top on both sides are stone seats. Behind the vihara is a pokuna; turning left from this we come into the long thoroughfare, or passage-way. This leads to a very beautiful group of pillars, with richly carved capitals. Away to the right again others gleam amid the trees, and any one interested might wander on in this section of the jungle for long, finding many interesting memorials of the great company of monks who once made it their home. In the flickering sunlight, with the morning dew still on the leaves, alone with the butterflies and birds, squirrels and lizards, and occasionally a wild, shy creature of the woods, this desultory wandering among evidence of ancient life has a peculiar fascination. An excellent plan of all this district is to be found in the 1911–12 Archæological Report.

By retracing our steps along the central line of thoroughfare we come out again on the cart-track which leads through to Jetawanarama, and can then return to the canoes and try the other road. This, the Outer Circular Road, passes a very splendid specimen of a monastery known as the "King's Palace," where there is the largest and most perfect moonstone yet discovered. The surface shines like marble, and a lively procession of thirteen, instead of the usual nine, animals prances round it. The difficulty of photographing a moonstone, which is of course always flat on the ground, and keeping it in perfect focus, is no

small one. In this case, though the stone is so much larger than usual, the task is easier because a square stone at the top of the steps provides a convenient mount from which the camera may be tilted downwards. It is only by doing so that the detail on the stone can be shown, and the illustration on p. 112 gives a section of the moonstone taken in this manner to show the delicacy of the carving and the life-like activity of the animals. The sacred geese are large, and carry a lotus in their beaks in the usual fashion.

As it is only by the examination of detail that observation is encouraged, it is well here to look closely at these fine steps, which are built after a pattern continually to be seen in these royal cities, but are more easily examined than most owing to the fact that the wing-stones, or balustrades, are missing. To begin with, each step has in the centre and at both ends a squatting dwarf in an Atlas-like posture, which suggests he is supporting the tread with enormous effort. He is on the usual model of such dwarfs, and a larger specimen of the brotherhood appears on a panel above the steps. They all have curled wigs and are girded with cords and adorned with necklets. That they were not slaves is shown by the profusion of ornaments, bangles, and anklets which cover arms and legs. Each one grasps in one hand what looks like a stalk of a plant, but is really a conventionalised snake, thus bringing in the "snake" touch shown in the usual guard-stones in their "naga-hoods." The dwarf guardian is said to represent Bhairava, defender of temples and treasures.

Though this entrance, with its many beauties,

may well encourage lingering, there are other points about this extraordinarily large and fine specimen of a monastery—for of course it was that and no "palace"—that demand attention. The size of the coping-stones alone calls for admiration. Eight of them are sufficient to border the immense central platform. And the largest of these attains thirty-one feet in length. Though size is not to be numbered among the attractions of the ancient specimens of sculpture to be found in Ceylon, as it was in Egypt, where the colossal dimensions of temples and the unparalleled achievements in handling blocks of stone evoke awe, yet that the Cingalese could have excelled in this way also, had they chosen, is shown in such specimens as these. As a rule, however, they rely upon grace and delicacy rather than "mightiness," and even here it is not so much the dimensions of the stones as the perfect line of the moulding which absorbs attention.

In the four corners of the court were the four usual smaller "temples." At the back, outside the wall, is the usual pond, and there are various other ruins which would repay examination. The whole of this splendidly proportioned and designed monastery was cleared out in the season of 1911–12.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO GREATEST DAGABAS

JETAWANARAMA dagaba was handed over to the Buddhist community in 1909, after which two members of the Atamasthana Committee issued a permit for five years to a Buddhist monk to work "improvements" on it. There were certain conditions attached to this permit to safeguard the dagaba, and all of these were broken. One condition was no trees were to be felled on the tope or stupa, and the monk felled them all! He dug recklessly in an amateur way and broke one of the flat upright pillars beautifully carved called a stele. So the Archæological Commissioners stepped in, in 1910, with the tacit consent of the Committee, to save the venerable ruin. (1910–11 *Report.*) But even yet there is something in the cropped condition of the dagaba, which arouses a feeling of dissatisfaction.

The guards at the south entrance are ganas, or dwarfs, a more unusual figure than the ordinary guardian and not so graceful; they follow the typical lines considered proper for dwarfs.

The chief beauty of the ruin lies in the splendid platform of hewn blocks from which the drum rises, and the bits of carving on stele and stones near the altars. Some of these are very high art

and well worth study, showing the most graceful human figures as well as floral design of great delicacy. The platform is covered with a thick growth of a small pink-flowered shrub, diversified by a handsome plant like a variegated foxglove, though quite different in the manner of its growth. But this is not difficult to penetrate, as luckily it does not share in the partiality for thorns indulged in by so many shrubs of this country. On the north side is a circular floral altar. On this side also, beyond the dagaba platform, and reaching far into the jungle, are the ruins of a great monastery of fourteen buildings, including shrines and residences, refectory and bath-house, as well as a small dagaba. The monastery entrance is still standing. It is a wonderful experience to traverse these silent groves, and see, on and on, as far as perspective allows, the grey columns, carrying one in thought back to the monoliths in wind-swept Cornwall or on the rocky shores of Scotland.

Taking it for granted that Jetawanarama is the ancient Abhayagiriya, we may recall that this dagaba was built 88 B.C. by a set of monks in rivalry with the older community of the Maha Vihara or Chief Monastery of Anuradhapura, of which the Brazen Palace may have been the headquarters. This was on the return of King Watagemunu, nephew of Dutugemunu, from the Caves of Dambulla, where he had stayed in exile sixteen years, having ascended the throne in 104 B.C. and having been almost immediately driven out. It was enlarged by King Gaja Bahu I, between A.D. 113 and 125, and reached 315 feet in height. King Maha Sena (A.D. 275), misled by a heretic

priest, pulled down the Maha Vihara, scattered the monks, and exalted the Abhayagiri community. He used the stones of the destroyed buildings for making a hall for the reception of a statue of Buddha, and the dagaba at this time attained the height of its splendour.

In the seventh century the religious fraternity disgraced themselves sadly, and slaughtered a certain monk who had told tales of them to the reigning king. They were severely punished, having their hands cut off and being appointed guardians of tanks—a degraded office. But, as we have seen, in the reign of Mahinda II (A.D 787) the monastery was rebuilt, costing 300,000 pieces of gold. He built "an exceedingly beautiful terraced palace with several floors," and out of 60,000 pieces of gold he made an image of Buddha, adorning the head with a gem of great value. It was probably this image which was presented with a jewel by King Dhatu Sena, the jewel having been "lost out of its eye"; also Dhatu Sena caused the "supreme curly locks of that image" to be represented by "a profusion of sapphires," though how this difficult feat was carried out is hard to imagine. Curly hair is admired by the Cingalese, who differ in this trait from the lank-locked Burmese.

Passing round Jetawanarama, and following eastward the Outer Circular Road, we come to a stately image of Buddha alone by the roadside amid the trees. The canopy once sheltering it has gone, and it sits here in the shadowy grove, silent and revered, with the smoke and grease of a never-ceasing stream of devotees blackening

still further the ancient stone. Beyond it the road winds northward and leads to a most beautiful pair of stone baths, known as the *Kuttam* (or Twin) *Pokuna*. One has been partially restored, so that the firm lines of the hewn blocks can be admired. This is the nearer one, and the flight of steps leading down into it has a balustrade of scroll pattern, contrasting with the much more unusual one of straight design in the further tank. The two tanks, which lie end to end, are 51 feet in breadth, while one is 132 feet and the other 91 feet in length. The stones used in construction are very long and laid in regular courses. As I drew near two green lizards, about a yard long, darted into holes in the stones, and just as I snapped the shutter, a tortoise, making a dive from the steps, broke through the green weed which had formed a covering for the whole pond, and left a black hole like a distorted image of itself! Bathing-places such as these, either stone-hewn or stone-lined, are true pokuna whatever their size. The conception of this pair is masterly and to use them must have been a delight. There is no history attached to them, but it does not take much imagination to repeople them with bright-hued figures trooping down to the margin, throwing off their outer garments, bobbing up and down in the water, and pouring it over themselves as their descendants love to do to the present day.

To the west lies a "street" or road of the ancient city, a continuation of the Sacred Road. Beside it on the east, close to the Kuttam Pokuna, are the ruins of a large monastery, and a little

further up, on the other side, a number of Hindu ruins in a group. Can this be "the residence for people of foreign faiths" mentioned in the following extract ?

"King Pandukabhaya formed the four suburbs of the city and the Abhya tank and to the westward of the palace, the great cemetery and the place of execution and torture. He provided a nigroada tree for the devata Wessawano, and a temple for the Wiyadhodevo ; a gilt hall for his own use, as well as a palace distributed into many apartments. These he constructed near the western gate. He employed a body of 500 chandalas (low caste people) to be scavengers of the city, and 200 chandalas to be nightmen ; 150 chandalas to be carriers of corpses, and the same number of chandalas at the cemetery.

"He formed a village for them on the north-west of the cemetery and they constantly performed every work according to the direction of the king. To the north-east of this chandala village he established a village of Nichi-chandalas, to serve as cemetery men to the low castes. To the northward of that cemetery and between it and the Pusala mountains, a range of buildings was at the same time constructed for the king's huntsmen. To the northward of these, he formed the Gamini tank. He also constructed a dwelling for the various classes of devotees. To the eastward of that cemetery, the king built a residence for the Brahman Jotiyo (the chief engineer)" . . . besides other items. "To the westward of that temple and eastward of the huntsmen's buildings he provided a residence for 500 persons of various foreign religious faiths."

This extract is given in full, as any one who

has gained even an elementary notion of the principal points of the city may instructively trace out the references, and, followed as far as is possible, they work out so that the settlement of "foreign faiths" comes somewhere near these ruins.

Close by the Kuttam Pokuna on the east is an ancient track which winds round (about 1¼ miles) to Pankuliya, a monastery showing a fine set of ruins and a seated stone image of Buddha.

Still further out north-west of this is Vijayarama (see p. 137).

By the Outer Circular Road (east branch) from the Kuttam Pokuna we may return to the centre of the city. This is not an interesting route; it runs for the first part through plantain groves and paddy fields. Soon an irrigation canal appears on the right or west of the road. In the strip of jungle beyond it on that side are several interesting remains, but their exact positions are almost impossible to indicate; they can only be found by those who search for them. In one of them the dwarf guardian stone appears. Another shows a very distinct type, having a paved verandah. But most interesting of all is an extraordinary pit with brick dwellings in it, the use and meaning of which can only be vaguely conjectured. Could this possibly have been at one time part of the vast subterranean buildings of the Royal Palace? The basement, in fact?

On the other side of the Outer Circular Road a small path, about fifty yards from where the irrigation canal crosses the road, leads to a plantain plantation. This marks the track to "Nakha Vehera." This particular place is always so

spelt in the Archæological Reports, and in spite of the fact that Vehera and Vihara are given identical meanings in a Cingalese dictionary, "Vehera" is used of a dagaba and not a temple, for instance, Et Vehera Kande at Mihintale is so spelt, see p. 152, and in the present instance the principal building was once a dagaba. The path is a little swampy, but supplied with stepping-stones. It goes direct to a cottage, from which point it is necessary to break away to the right before seeing rather a shapeless brick mass in open ground. Near these are the remains of a vihara. The central ruin is quite unlike anything yet seen. On the west side are cut deep recesses, and there are flat slabs at the cardinal points on three sides, possibly floral altars. Very little is known about this vehera, which does not follow the usual type at all. To the north-west, about two minutes' walk away, is another vihara, worth seeing, because the guard-stones are very finely carved, and, like those at the King's Palace, display a sculptured *torana*.

After this, returning to the Outer Circular Road and following it, we pass on the left, just before reaching Abhayagiri dagaba, the headquarters of one of the few communities of Buddhist monks, here, who do not belong to the Siamese fraternity.

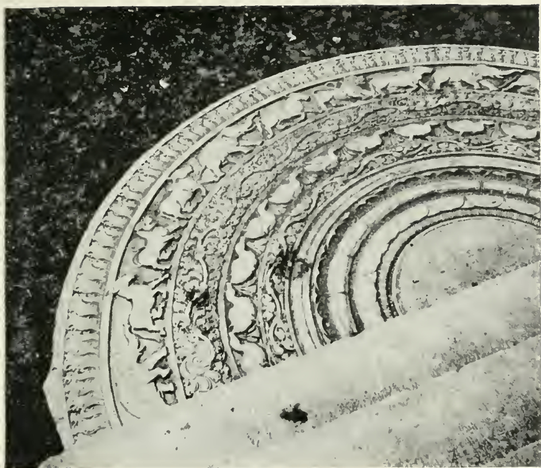
The so-called Abhayagiriya is spoilt by the hideous brick erection built on the summit to replace the old one which fell into ruins, but otherwise it has great charm. Now that Ruanweli has been vulgarised and Jetawanarama shorn of its glory, the unspoiled beauty of Abhayagiriya

makes it the most attractive of the three great dagabas, at any rate to those who have an eye for beauty.

The worn, broken steps, the feathery shrubs growing from the red pavement slabs, the orange tinge of the altars, and the tope rising, thickly clothed in jasmine and lantana, show pictures at every turn. Here and there are fine remains of carving, one, a perfect slab, with a seven-headed cobra which caught the light of the sun and shone out from a dark background, positively cried aloud for reproduction. It is 3 feet 10 inches in height, and the minuteness of the work shows the very scales. The naga's throat is encircled by a jewelled collar. In the eastern chapel, or altar, remains of painting and gilding can be traced; the northern one has been reset. The height to the top of the drum is at present 150 feet 6 inches.

Opposite each of the four altars outside the platform is a *mandapaya*, or guardhouse, making a most effective entrance, the worn pillars and graceful vases being overshadowed by spreading trees.

It has often been said that the Cingalese architects built their dagabas on insufficient foundations, but this aspersion has recently been proved untrue. A shaft was sunk at Abhayagiriya which revealed brick to a depth of 26 feet, and that was founded on a bed of concrete. As a matter of fact these solid erections with their tremendous weight could never have stood through the march of time as they have done had they not been "well and truly laid," with foundations extended to resist the lateral as well as the direct vertical thrust.



SECTION OF MOONSTONE, "KING'S PALACE." p. 103



SEVEN-HOODED COBRA AT ABHAYAGIRIYA.



BATHING-PLACE NEAR THE BUND OF TISSA-WEWA. p. 119



CARVING ON WALL OF LOWER TERRACE AT ISURUMUNIYA. p. 122

It is possible to ascend to the summit of this great tope by a path, which, though steep, presents no difficulty to any ordinarily active person.

The height of the dagaba (Jetawanarama), as given in the Mahawansa, was originally 160 cubits; a Ceylon builder's cubit is reckoned by Mr. Parker,[1] after careful comparisons, to be equal to 2 feet. The present height, exclusive of the brick-work crown, or platform, is about 230 feet. In an interesting diagram Mr. Parker shows that the apex of the third pyramid at Gizeh would fall within the spire of Abhayagiriya and its base angles coincide with the base from altar to altar, but the bowl-shaped dagaba does not give nearly so great an impression of size as the angular pyramid. The view from the summit is good, but not striking. It consists of acres and acres of richly green tree-tops, broken here and there by the spires of the great sister dagabas which rise from the living sea.

The dagaba was begun by King Maha Sena (A.D. 275–292), the same king who pulled down the Maha Vihara, or Brazen Palace, and used the stones for enlarging other religious buildings elsewhere. He never lived to complete the work, which was carried on by his son and successor. Leaving the dagaba and passing on by the road, which runs around it in a great curve, we soon see ruins on every side, remnants of the monasteries which clustered round the mighty dagaba. On the left, under a tree, is an unusually fine specimen of a *Yantra-gala*, cut into twenty-five square compartments on the surface like the

[1] *Ancient Ceylon.* (Luzac, 1909.)

one already seen near Ruanweli. The curious feature of these stones is that they are always found cut in squares of five or three, making the number of holes nine or twenty-five, but why this should be so remains a mystery. At one time it was a common idea to suppose that monks used these stones to induce a state of hypnotism, and they were called yogi stones, but it has now long been proved that they were relic-receptacles, placed beneath the pedestal of some great image to receive the treasured relics there deposited by the faithful. In many cases they have been found *in situ*, thus proving the matter beyond dispute.

A very short distance from the Yantra-gala is a fine railing of a curious pattern, made completely of stone, but in a style more appropriate to wood. This is called a Buddhist railing, and specimens of this class of work are very rare. It was found in 1890 in a mass of débris, and later completely rebuilt and set up. It is an excellent example of the way in which earlier builders found it difficult to shake their ideas free from the use of wood. "The railing forms a magical protection against evil spirits—the magic circle or square—for the relics enclosed within it; and the three rails usually found in it most probably typify the three protecting 'refuges' of Buddhism—the Buddha, the Law, and the Community of Monks." [1] Several examples of such a railing are known in India, but far more frequent than the actual thing is the representation of it in slight relief, which forms a fairly common

[1] *Ancient Ceylon*, by H. Parker. (Luzac, 1909.)

Indian ornament. It may be noted that the htees, or platforms, supporting the spires on the dagabas are often built to represent, in a rather far-off way, this form of railing, and it may be traced when looked for on those of Abhayagiriya (rebuilt) and Jetawanarama. Mr. Fergusson devotes a chapter to these railings. He speaks of the oldest-known examples being at Bodh-gaya and Bharhaut; but those are far more richly decorated than the specimen before us, and can in fact hardly be compared with it. It resembles very closely that at Sanchi, where, however, the posts are octagonal instead of square as in this instance. Mr. Fergusson comments on the essential woodenness of the structure, and notes how the holes must have been cut in the uprights, which were then thrust on to the horizontal rails, "not as any stone-work was done either before or after."[1]

The gateways in the rail at Sanchi, however, rise high, and are decorated with overpowering richness. There is nothing of that sort at Anuradhapura, where the only ornament is a vase with a flower on the outermost face of the post. We do not know the date of this rail, but it is possible it is antecedent to A.D. 200, at which Mr. Fergusson places the limiting date of the Indian examples. All around are the remains of the building to which it belonged, and which was, probably in Tamil incursions, so completely thrown down that literally there is not "one stone upon another," except where they have been dug out and replaced.

[1] *History of Indian Architecture.* (Murray. 1910 edition.)

CHAPTER VI

ABOUT AND AROUND

It is obvious that the position of the hotel was determined by the fine grounds available at the government gardens, and though it is not so centrally placed as the old rest-house, which was as near the main ruins as anything well could be, it has many things of interest round it. Just outside the grounds, near the jail, is Mirisaveti dagaba, the fourth largest in Anuradhapura; it was built by King Dutugemunu, even before Ruanweli and the Brazen Palace, and so dates from the second century B.C. It has been restored with funds supplied by the King of Siam, who, as prince, stayed in Ceylon in 1888 and left a sum of money to be applied to the restoration of some Buddhist building. An outer covering of red brick has been built up round the old core. The space between the two is a mansion for an innumerable colony of bats, and it is one of the sights of Anuradhapura to see them whirring out at sunset like the sweep of smoke or leaves blown before a gale.

The origin of Mirisavetiya lies in the forgetfulness of the king, who was accustomed to offer a portion of whatever he ate to the monks, but absent-mindedly one day consumed " a condiment

flavoured with chillies, called miriswetiya, or chilli-sambal" (which is the word for a preparation of chillies in Cingalese), omitting the usual ceremony, and felt bound in expiation to erect the dagaba called Mirisavetiya.

The chief beauty of this rotund pile lies in the altars, which are unusually high and decorated in alto-relievo. That on the west is the finest example, having been reset. Notice the two tall stele with the flowing floral design. At the time when Tennent wrote the dagaba was merely a mound covered with scrub, and the altars were buried in the débris.

The dagaba is surrounded by monastery ruins on three sides, there being no less than fourteen monasteries in this one community. Enclosed within the area belonging to them was also a large park-like space on the shores of Basawak Kulam. Up to the time of Kasyapa IV (A.D. 912) the community of Mirisaveti, the Maricavetti of the Mahawansa, was apparently not of much account. But it was rebuilt in the reign of Kasyapa V (A.D. 929–939), and richly gifted and endowed, though by that date Polonnaruwa had become the capital of the kingdom.

It is possible that the vihara, with huge columns, standing to the west of the dagaba, may be "the great house at Maricavatti," built by Prince Kasyapa in the seventeenth century for the monk Maha Dhammakathi. These mighty columns are unmatched except by those at the "Elephant Stables." They have grooves 12 inches wide, cut at the top, in which rested the beams supporting the roof.

Mirisavetiya is best reached from the hotel by a little footpath breaking away on the west and following the banks of a small stream, presently crossed by a rough bridge. This is one of the canals fed by Tissa-Wewa. At every turn one is reminded of the difference between East and West; the entire dissimilarity of the foliage, the odd creatures encountered, keep one's mind ever fresh and attract the attention even of the naturally unobservant. Along this tiny stream as I wandered one evening, a tortoise, about half the size of a football, under the tree roots on the bank, was attempting to bite a small squirming fish he had somehow caught. But the jaws of the gourmand could make no impression on the tough skin of the victim, and at last he dragged it into his home under the bank to be tackled at leisure. Only a few yards further up a mud-coloured water-snake lay motionless in the shallows waiting for prey to drop into his jaws.

If instead of crossing this tiny stream we follow the path along it, we come to a junction of three streams, in two of which people are forbidden to bathe as the water runs into the drinking-tank; but the third, being merely for irrigation, is open, and much appreciated, as the pretty sight of a mother with a young daughter just budding into womanhood, and three small children, all bathing together, showed.

From here we can mount to the bund of Tissa, which sweeps round in a magnificent curve, showing views of this most beautiful of all the lakes, which was formed by the great King Tissa. This tank it is which is kept up by a channel, *Yoda Ela*,

connecting it with Kala-Wewa, 56 miles away (see p. 46).

Beneath the steep slope of the bund on the landward side are some curious rock outcrops, like those at the Gal-gé and Vessagiriya; nestling beneath one of these is a small bathing-tank, with a dressing-room hewn out of solid rock. On the face of the rock, flanking the dressing-room on each side, is a most animated bas-relief, on one side of elephants bathing amid lotus plants, and on the other, charging away frightened by a sudden scare. Mr. Bell describes this as an absolutely unique piece of sculpture, and without exception the most spirited and life-like to be seen anywhere among the ruins of Anuradhapura. It is supposed to date from the time of Parakrama. A very little way beyond is a more elaborate tank, and a little columned chamber beneath the shadow of a huge boulder. There is nothing these ancient people are more to be envied for than their delightful facilities for bathing amid beautiful surroundings in the open air.

In amongst the great boulders above is a curious little lean-to dwelling, made by placing stone rafters across a niche in the rock, another example of the use of stone after the manner of wood as in the Buddhist railing.

In a further set of great boulders, facing toward the lake, under an overhanging rock, is a curious circular diagram filled with mysterious symbols and having a procession of figures scratched on the circumference. The whole is so lightly done it looks as if it might be the work of some idle tourist of yesterday playing with a knife, but it represents

the scientific knowledge of some man who lived close on a thousand years ago maybe, and the meaning of the fish, scorpion, tortoise, and other sketches which suggest, but do not follow, the signs of the zodiac, were of deep significance to him. For here we have what may be one of the very earliest maps of the world. Needless to say, it is founded on the Buddhist cosmogony, that idea which seems to us so absurdly "in the air" that it is marvellous any sane man could ever have believed it.

"The circle is 6 feet in diameter and has a double ring round the edge in which fish and crustaceans are represented—undoubtedly the ocean. The concentric circles, with their wide interspaces at the centre of the ring, can assuredly mean only the *Sakvala*, in the centre of which rises *Maha Meru* surrounded by the seven seas and walls of rock which shut in that fabulous mountain. . . . Sun and moon (in the second strips) lie on either side of the *Sakvala*; round about in space are scattered numerous other worlds represented by quadrisected circles. Below and around is the world of waters in which swarm gigantic uncouth denizens—fish, turtle, crab, chank and other marine fauna." (1901 *Report.*)

The Buddhist cosmogony is altogether too complicated to be referred to at length here, but a very short summary, compiled from Sir George Scott's *The Burman*,[1] may explain the principal details. The central point is this great mountain, Meru, the highest peak in the world, in shape something like a cask floating end up in the water.

[1] *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, by Shway Yoe. (Macmillan, 1896.)

At various heights upon it are the six blissful seats of the *Dewahs*, or fortunate gods or spirits, though many dwell elsewhere, for instance in the sun and moon and stars and planets. "Away on the empyrean, rising perpendicularly one above the other," are sixteen seats where those who are perfect, having got rid of all "clinging," dwell. "It is not till they have freed themselves from all affection for matter and material things that they can pass to the incalculable heights of the four seats of Arupa, where the Immaterials dwell in a state of sublimest contemplation, waiting only for the moment when they shall pass beyond into Neh'ban." Down beneath the earth are eight great hells and thousands of small ones. Girdling the earth are seven ranges of mountains and seven seas. Also four great islands, in the southernmost of which dwells the race of man. Each of these has 500 smaller ones round it, where dwell nations like the English and other heretics.

It will be seen, therefore, that the old-time monk who attempted to depict this cosmogony on the rock was of an ambitious disposition. How he, and others like him, reconcile their theology with such a cosmogony is beyond the range of the simple Western mind to understand.

A very little way beyond the "map" we come to an opening by a pond, which takes us at once into the precincts of Isurumuniya, a curious little temple built in the rocks, and having many points of interest. Isurumuniya dates back to the time of King Tissa, but has been much restored and modernised. A hideous brick structure, used as a preaching-hall, is completed by protruding iron

girders, and furnished with a gramophone; this stands not far from the rock-cut recumbent statue of the Buddha, in weird contrast, which does not in any way seem to jar on the devotees. The chief abbot, of many years, to whom a good deal of the "restoration" is due, wanders about, a venerable figure holding a long staff of alternate strips of black and white horn and ivory. Finding he had on the wall of the sleeping-quarters pictures torn from illustrated papers representing many European monarchs but lacking King George, Britain being only represented by a very ancient print of Queen Victoria, I offered to send him a coloured picture of his sovereign, whereupon he drew out of the folds of his yellow robes, and handed to me with a flourish, a correct English calling-card engraved "Rev. H. J. Saranankara."

The chief shrine is painted white, and perched up against the huge black rocks with striking effect. The gilded image within is also rock-cut, and is surrounded by innumerable tiny ones in every conceivable material, a jumble of the offerings made by pilgrims from age to age.

The terrace on which this temple stands shows some fine bits of stone-carving in the panels, and by the edge of the pretty little tank are executed elephants in both alto and bas-relief, in that spirited manner which never fails to compel attention however often repeated the subject may be. A tiny niche in the rock above is intended for a lamp, to throw light upon them in the darkness, and opposite is a curious carving of a man and a horse. Happening to remark to the native interpreter that the man was not of an Indian, but

rather of an Egyptian type, I received the awed reply :

"That not a man, that god."

Above the tank grows a bo-tree, and on the platform, still higher, is a manufactured "Buddha's" footprint in imitation of that at Adam's Peak.

At Isurumuniya the ramble on foot ends, but if desired the pretty little temple may be equally well approached by road, and this way the expedition may be prolonged. By this route we have to start through the bazaar, turning down the Kurunegala Road past the Peacock Palace. Not very far from it, on the right, is a hillock of considerable size popularly called "Elala's Tomb." Elala, we know, was buried outside the southern gate of the city, but even the position of the southern gate is a matter of conjecture, being placed by some authorities *north* of Thuparama. The Archæological authorities have cut deep into this mound without finding anything to confirm the tradition, but much to suggest it has been a dagaba.

Not far beyond this is a very rough road leading off at right angles to Isurumuniya, which can be seen gleaming white against the black background about a quarter of a mile away.

It is perhaps about half a mile further, by continuing on the main road, that we come to Vessagiriya, where, amid three great groups of granite rock, are mingled the remains of a monastery of immense extent. This is a most fascinating scramble, revealing platforms, stairways, caves, and many mysterious and attractive angles and corners and unexpected niches.

It is quite different from anything yet seen. It is a town in itself, a town of many levels and many dwellings. Facing the central group of rocks, on the ground level, are the remains of a small "Tooth Temple," where at some time in its varied history the sacred relic may have been hidden.

From here a flight of steps, renewed, leads easily to the summit of the great outcrop, whence is revealed a splendid panorama. The huge hill of Mihintale, eight miles away, with a dagaba stuck like a wen on its side, shows up sharply from a rich tree-clad plain. Near it is the still sharper outline of Ritigala. And on all sides the eye wanders easily to the limit of sight.

There is so much to see immediately round the bases of the giant boulders that it would take a considerable time to trace it all out. A confused impression remains of low boundary walls marking the outlines of spacious hall and refectory, and stumps of pillars showing where the roofs were upheld. The oldest part of the monastery is coeval with Mihintale and the dawn of Buddhism in the land, but much has been added later. The first group of rocks was at one time thickly covered with buildings, and on the far side the ground-remains tell their own tale.

On the summit of the middle group are traces of decayed dagabas, but much more interesting than these are the great boulders, tumbled at all angles, some so lightly poised that it looks as if a shower of raindrops would overbalance them, and others firmly set, a growth of the mass itself. Amid these boulders, underneath their hanging

eaves, nestling into their curved sides, are the cells, or caves of individual monks. Each has been careful to cut a horizontal dripstone above his dwelling so that the floods of rain-water might not follow the curve inwards to his living-room, and across and above the drip-stone are queer-cut markings of a date more ancient than any inscriptions on slabs yet found. These are in the "Brahmi-lipi letter record" and have been deciphered. They tell of individual ownership in a community where most things were held in common.

It needs more imagination than the average man possesses to reconstruct this rabbit-warren as it must have been in the time of its glory. But we might attempt it, peopling the cool shadows of the great rocks with the shaven, brown-faced men, noting the sudden precipices falling from the thresholds of their habitations, the queer little steps cut from the face of the rock; conjuring up the bird's-eye view they must have had of the beautiful buildings below, lying spread out like a draught-board between this group and the next, with the sunlight and shadow showing on the tiled roofs and paved courtyards and decorated entrances; and to complete the picture it is necessary to imagine some of the saffron-clad monks flitting up and down and in and out like some strange species of giant moth, passing steadily barefoot along the terraces, over the little connecting bridges, and up and down the sun-baked slopes of the rocks, while around and about their groups of island homes the great jungle-covered plain billowed and rolled like a green ocean.

The most interesting of all the caves is to be found in the third or most southerly group of rocks. It is spacious, and the lintel and door-posts still stand in position, resembling those left at the Gal-gé. The heaps of bricks, worn and tumbled, on each side, show where the outer wall stood. That it is now tenanted by innumerable bats at least one sense testifies.

The inscription shows it to have been the "Cave of Kuma, son of the Chief Tisa." This is cut at a higher level than the entrance, and is found above a sort of fault or shaft on one side, down which air and a feeble glint of light may have reached the occupant.

Vessagiriya is one of the last of the great monasteries to be excavated completely. In the Report of the Archæological Survey published in 1914 we read a full account of it, and gather the extent of its power in the days when its grounds reached up to Isurumuniya and the bund of Tissa-Wewa.

CHAPTER VII

PAVILION, PALACE, OR MONASTERY ?

LYING west of Anuradhapura is a galaxy of buildings of supreme interest whose use and design have puzzled the most experienced heads; they are likely to remain an insoluble problem unless fresh evidence is forthcoming.

There are no less than fourteen similar groups of buildings so far excavated, strung out along the Outer Circular Road and the Arripu Road, which cuts it as the arrow bisects the bow. These are built on a plan differing entirely from the usual five-of-cards type of monastery so often exemplified. The characters which distinguish them reappear in all, and the differences are in minor points. One marked similarity is that they are all built, apparently of set purpose, on rocky sites, and the rock, wherever possible, is worked into the building, allowed for, and adapted. The plan of all is of two buildings, or platforms, an outer and an inner, built with geometrical exactitude and linked by a stone of such dimensions and so ponderous that the wonder is how it was ever placed where it is. This crosses a chasm, or moat, which surrounds the inner building, but its weight precluded its having been anything in

the nature of a drawbridge, for in some instances it amounts to over thirty tons.

The outer building is entered by a porch, and gives no evidence of ever having had any pillars, whereas the inner one in every case has been plentifully supplied with pillars, many of which, as stumps or complete, remain.

The "bridge" stone has a short flight of steps ascending to it on both sides, and the threshold of the inner building is paved by a large flat stone, in which the grooves cut for the door-sockets are conspicuous. All the buildings are distinguished by a notable plainness; with one or two small exceptions, noted hereafter, there is nothing in the nature of ornament to be found on them.

There are outbuildings in various positions fitted into the general plan as the character of the ground allows; they generally surround the twin central block, and in some cases the remains of an ambulatory or covered walk can be traced as well.

The drive along the Outer Circular Road is an easy one. The first group of ruins passed is not of very great interest; by far the best specimens are to be seen near the junction of the Arippu and Outer Circular Roads or in the former. It is therefore advisable to turn at once down the leafy arch of this deserted route, and explore the Blocks numbered A and B by the Survey. Block A is of particular interest, for here in February, 1913, under the superintendence of Mr. Perera, of the Archæological Survey, there were excavated by the coolies two tiny gold images of the sedent Buddha: one of solid bronze coated with gold,



ISURUMUNIYA MONASTERY.

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MONK'S CAVE-CELL AT VESSAGIRIYA.

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about three inches high, follows the local pattern, with the hands lying palms upward, in the lap, one above the other; the other, a fragile shell of gold, about half the size of the first, is of an unmistakable Burmese character, the image having Mongolian features and being represented with the right hand drooping over the knee in Burmese style.

Excavation has proved that the roofs of these buildings were made of tiles, and that the "bridge" itself was roofed. There are, however, no indications that the outer platforms of the "pavilions" were covered in at all; for, besides the fact that there were no pillars, there are no stones cut to receive wooden posts such as might have been substituted for them, thus we are driven to the conclusion that this portion was a sort of open courtyard.

In Block B a special feature is a deep well, cut partly out of the rock in a curved basin, and partly lined by shaped stones; a rock-hewn flight of steps descends to it.

Close to the junction of the Arippu and Outer Circular Roads are Blocks D and E. The former is a most interesting specimen—in fact, if time lacks, and only one group can be visited, this should be chosen. The moat is very deep and wide, and can be especially well seen from the back. If a system of running water were in use—and the Cingalese were so clever in this matter one can hardly doubt it was so—this surrounding moat must have kept the living-rooms pleasantly cool. It is impossible to suppose that these people, who were so punctilious in the matter of



ablution, would have allowed stagnant water, with all its horrible possibilities for evil, to lie around their dwellings.

The most interesting detail in this block is a *mutra-gala*, or urinal, so highly decorated and sculped as to be almost startling in the midst of buildings whose sole adornment is a plain mould—or maybe a little fluted pilaster in low relief. The decoration of this wonderful piece of work can only be described as flamboyant; on the horizontal slab is a representation of the inevitable house.

In the first block of "pavilions" examined there is a specimen of a perfectly restored porch showing the arrangement of the pillars which supported it. In Block F it will be noticed that a similar porch has sunk forwards; this has been left untouched just as it stands, but the slant was evidently not intentional on the part of the ancient builder, being due to a subsidence (see p. 134). Mr. Burrows says of these entrances:

"They were all constructed to one design. Small porticoes project from front and back to the door-frame; these are supported on eight inner and a like number of outer uprights, and roofed by horizontal slabs laid athwart crossbeams. Upon the ceiling slabs a *sikhara* of some sort in brick-work must have risen, for the slabs are roughed externally above.

"It was the undue weight of these superstructures, undoubtedly, which caused the spreading of the outer pillars and the sinking—*always inward*—of the roof, so as to give the appearance of a deliberately designed backward slope." [1]

[1] Quoted in Archæological Report, 1911–12.

After seeing some or all of these ruins, the question inevitably arises what can have been their purpose? Why do they all so closely resemble each other and so strikingly differ from anything else in ancient Anuradhapura? Some people have seen in them the residential part of the town as distinct from the religious edifices, and others have gone so far as to identify them with the palaces of bygone kings. The latter are not experts, but the local guides, finding that the term "palaces" attracts popular attention more than any other word, have enlarged on this view.

The complete excavation of these groups of buildings was carried out by Mr. Ayrton, Archæological Commissioner in 1913, but of course their existence had been known long before that date.

By far the best authority, of course, is Mr. Bell, with whose judgment and experience in such a matter no one can attempt to compete. In the 1911-12 Report he gives a detailed account of the buildings so far as they were then known. He says they were photographed as long ago as 1870, and that Mr. Burrows did some digging, and described them in 1885. He quotes from Mr. Burrows' Report, from which an extract appears on the previous page. Then he adds a few remarks of his own. He suggests they are monasteries, but monasteries of a peculiar type. He compares them with the similar buildings found at Ritigala to the number of about fifty.

In his own words:

"What ascetical monks then once bore with the isolation and physical discomfort of habita-

tions built on exposed sun-smitten rock, rather than accept shelter at better found, cool, and shady monasteries, of gregarious, if less austere, brethren of the robe ?

"The Mahawansa furnishes the answer :

"It was for the Pansukulika brethren, the rag-robed fraternity, that Sena I (A.D. 846-866) built, as it were by a miracle, a great vihara at *Arittha Pabbata* (Ritigala) and endowed it with great possessions, giving to it royal privileges and honours.

"In the twentieth year of his successor, Sena II (A.D. 866-901), the 'Pansukulika Brethren,' who had apparently lived hitherto with the Abhayagiri sect in peace, are recorded to have left the Abhayagiri and departed thence."

Mr. Bell goes on to associate these monks with the Mirisaveti dagaba, and thence, guided by architectural connecting-links, with these strange buildings, and concludes :

"The Buddhist monks, who occupied the inclement rock-stretches, apart from other fraternities, may well have been a Pansukulika schism which had cut itself adrift from its Buddhist brethren, and shunned the haunts of men."

Of this theory Mr. Ayrton remarks :

"It is supported by a poor array of facts, but as it is the only satisfactory one yet put forward, it is worth serious consideration."

To this we may add that there is little likely to be any one whose knowledge in these matters surpasses that of Mr. Bell, and his theory must

therefore be given precedence unless further evidence contradicts or confirms it, and this is improbable, as all the excavation possible has already been accomplished in this district. The "pavilions," therefore, are merely another kind of monastery, but so long as human nature remains unaltered, so long will visitors prefer to be told that these mysterious ruins are the "palaces" of King Tissa, King Dutugemunu, and King Parakrama, the only three kings whose names they can remember.

CHAPTER VIII

VIJAYARAMA—A JUNGLE SOLITUDE

There are an increasing number of people who, in reaction from the intense "drive" of modern life and inventions, prefer to strike out, even if ever so little, toward the solitudes. One such solitude, in a small way, may be attained by an excursion to the outlying monastery of Vijayarama. A guide must be taken, as the way is not altogether easy to find, and involves a fair amount of walking.

Choice of routes is abundant, but it is well to start by the Sacred Road and go on by its continuation, the Green Path Road, so as to pick up one or two objects, not yet visited, by the way.

About half a mile up this road a vista has been cut through the trees to the right, to enable any one to see the ruined mass called Burrows' Brick Building, which has evoked interest altogether disproportionate to its size, because it is built on the same lines as the Royal Palace at Polonnaruwa, though it is much smaller. It is difficult, indeed, for an amateur to make anything of the shapeless pile, overgrown, distorted, and clamped together by the sinuous roots of the trees which have fastened themselves upon it. If they were cut away now the whole of the brick-work would



A PORCH OF ONE OF THE PAVILIONS.

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VIJAYARAMA.

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probably collapse. As it is, it stands in the quiet glade, a monument telling an imperfect story not yet fully deciphered. But it is at all events quite different from anything yet discovered at Anuradhapura. As I stood there, looking at it, my mind ran back to the account of King Dutugemunu in his palace: "While seated on the throne, which was covered with drapery of exquisite value and softness, in the state apartments, lighted up with aromatic oils, and perfumed with every variety of incense, and spread with the richest carpets, attended by musicians and choristers decked; this monarch was pondering over his exalted royal state, and calling to his recollection the sacrifice of countless lives he had occasioned; and peace of mind was denied him."

Near by me a spider, of a kind I had never seen before, had spun an enormous web of a curious shape. It glittered iridescent in the sun, which pierced through the foliage in a lightning shaft. The insect itself was not so large as a two-anna bit. He had a canoe-shaped excrescence at right angles across his back. This was striped black and white and the body beneath was speckled with yellow. Like the monarch, he sat in the midst of his gorgeous palace, though the lives that he had sacrificed did not trouble him! To-day or to-morrow he would be no more, swept away with the result of his labour, and though the king had a rather longer lease, yet he too, musing in the midst of his embroideries, had been swept away, leaving only a problematical tree-grown pile to suggest the whereabouts of his palace.

On the subject of this palace Mr. Bell says:

"Everything points to its definite location within the area now lying between the Y Road and Outer Circular Road on the east, or, broadly, between Jetawanarama, Abhaygiri and Thuparama Groups . . . of the Palace itself, unless it be the massive brick structure once storied, still standing—no traces remain above ground and Tamil invaders have left not a stone standing." (1893 *Report.*)

Mr. Burrows, who had the best opportunity for judging, as he saw it before it became so dilapidated, thinks that the present building may have been erected by King Nissanka Malla on his visit to Anuradhapura at the end of the twelfth century; he judges thus because of its striking resemblance to the palace still standing at Polonnaruwa sometimes attributed to that monarch. It may have been so, and yet on this same site may have stood an earlier palace of the kings of the line of Wijaya. For it is probable that if once used as a royal site, such a tradition would be preserved through the ages and no meaner buildings allowed to encroach on the king's reservation. Major Forbes quotes from an "ancient native account," the name of which he does not give:

"The palace [at Anuradhapura] has immense ranges of building, some of two, others of three storeys in height; and its subterranean apartments are of great extent."

Beyond this to-day we cannot get, the mystery remains a mystery lightened only by vague shafts of conjecture.

The Green Path Road may be followed up to the neighbourhood of the Kuttam Pokuna, and beyond this point the way to Vijayarama lies along the ancient grass-grown road (mentioned on p. 108), which finally merges into a jungle track. Following this, for ever in deep shade, screened by the thickly growing scrub and trees, we came at last to a small plantation and mounted the bund of a tank (*Palugas Wewa*) covered with lotus flowers.

Once more in the jungle the way leads through a wood of scraggy trees resembling olives; these are called *Vira*, and in season (August) bear a small edible fruit like a raspberry. The undergrowth has been cleared out by the labour of the Archæological Survey, and, peering between the twisted stems, we soon see the gleam of granite stones, here and there, scattered widely. From the point where walking begins near the Kuttam Pokuna, the distance to these buildings is about one mile and a half.

Of Vijayarama itself nothing is known except what the stones and tokens have revealed; there is nothing by which we can recognise it in the country's annals; even the name has been given to it in modern times. Yet here once stood a large and spreading monastery which possessed, in addition to all the usual buildings, a dagaba, and a preaching-hall of an exceedingly beautiful design which has attracted men from far. This was connected with the main building by a raised passage walled in, and reached by a flight of steps on each side.

The most attractive feature of this fine piece of work are the carved stones decorating the exterior

wall of the platform. These are panels with figures differing from each other, some containing only a single male figure and others a male and female. They stand beneath a carved canopy of curious makara-pattern. These bloated dragon beasts face each other open-mouthed, each with a figure, sometimes human, sometimes animal, in their jaws. In the hollows of their backs are quaint dwarfs. The makaras, with their curved backs and fish-like tails, here much more resemble dolphins than crocodiles. Besides these there are striking gargoyles and bits of floral decoration falling vertically. The impression made by this careful and artistic work, here, far out in the jungle, visited by comparatively few, was heightened by the gleams of light which, falling through the trees, struck, as if of set purpose, on the carvings, bringing out the delicate chiselling against a background of shadows. The guard-stones of a small vihara, showing a bloated dwarf of unusual size, positively shone with a kind of malicious intensity. The enormously fat figure sways to one side with one hand on hip, and follows his type in all the usual details, which may be clearly studied here owing to his comparatively large size (see illustration, p. 176).

One of the small viharas contains a headless and armless figure of Buddha in the rare upright attitude. There were probably three other similar figures and four seated ones.

"It may not be unreasonable, perhaps, to assume that this *pilimagé* (image-house) was dedicated to the four Manushi Buddhas, three of whom

preceded Gautama in the present *Kalpa*." (1893 *Report*.)

Outside the monastery wall are the monks' cells and the refectory, and in the outermost precincts a very interesting discovery was made of what has been undoubtedly a hot-water bathroom. The arrangement of the room leaves no doubt as to its purpose, and a quantity of charcoal and ashes was dug up, while there was—

"a low platform of brick-work, 5 feet square, doubtless the base of the lipa (hearth) used for heating the chatties of water intended for the ablution of the clay-bedaubed monks." (1893 *Report*.)

Judging by the sculpture and some votive tablets—copper plaques—unearthed at the dagaba here, the date of the monastery is placed at about the ninth century. Quaint bronze figures of men and animals very rudely shaped were dug up in the shrines. As two of these, a figure and an animal, lay in the direction of each of the cardinal points—*i.e.* north a lion, south a horse, east an elephant—Mr. Bell suggests that this series of animals, the same as that appearing on the moonstones (with the exception of the bullock, which may easily have been lost), points out some underlying connection between the two; the series may also have had some astronomical significance.

Further out even than Vijayarama extended the sacred buildings of Anuradhapura. For half a mile north-east is Kiribat dagaba, linked by name

with that other "milk-rice" dagaba at Polonnaruwa. It is now a mere shapeless mass, only 30 feet high and 200 feet round the base, but from its condition and construction may be ranked among the older, and may possibly have been the oldest of all the large dagabas.

CHAPTER IX

TWO OUTLYING MONASTERIES

MULLEGALLA has been warmly praised by the ex-Archæological Commissioner. Yet it is doubtful if it will appeal to ordinary people as much as Vijayarama with its superb preaching-hall, which gives the imagination something to work upon. Only those who have a live interest in these exceptional ruins will take the trouble to visit this most lonely little monastery, lying amid trees, beneath a carpet of speedwell blue.

To find it, Mihintale Road must first be followed to its junction with that to Jaffna. Some distance further the Jaffna Road is crossed by the railway, and here any conveyance must be left while we turn up the line to the left. A guide is essential, otherwise the narrow jungle path, breaking off about three-quarters of a mile beyond the crossing, would never be found. This leads through dappled light and shade, brightened by the red clusters of leaves of a plant like laurel, shining with the transparency of rubies where they catch the sun-shafts.

The walk is not severe, and almost unexpectedly we face in surprise a very small ruin showing many of the characteristics of the " Outer Pavilions."

Wonder deepens as the details of the construc-

tion are noted and seen to be exact, though all in miniature. The " moat " is but a ditch, the stone connecting-slab a toy, the little platforms, with and without pillars, respectively, are very small, yet their similarity to those of the larger pavilions is undeniable.

How comes it then that here, far to the north-east of the city, lies, so far as we know, one small isolated example of the same structures so abundantly found on the west? The query is unanswered. But there is this to add, at every fresh disclosure, every new excursion in Anuradhapura, we find some stimulus to the imagination, some distinctive feature which sets thought working; it is this which makes any trouble taken so abundantly well worth while. The interest is inexhaustible.

The remaining buildings of Mullegalla monastery are founded mostly on the rock, and the quarry from which the stone was procured is but a few yards away.

In one place four short broken flights of steps lead up to what was once a dagaba, and the plainness of the guard-stones and " risers " is another point of similarity with the " Outer Pavilions." There are some faint traces of a vase and blossoms having been scratched on one stone, but otherwise the blocks are plain. Around the dagaba are the stumps of the pillars in which once rested floral altars. The main building is deeply sunk in shade; it lies a little distance from the ruined steps which, in their peaceful abandonment, suggest something of the spirit of the place.

It is possible to extend this excursion by in-

cluding in it a visit to the immense monastery of Puliyankulam lying not far away. To do this it is necessary to return to the junction of road and rail and continue onward by the former in the direction of Jaffna.

After about a mile it is worth while to stop in order to inspect some curious deep earth pits, divided into compartments by brick-work, of which the use and meaning have not yet been solved. It is believed that these strange underground dwellings—if they were dwellings—belong to the very oldest part of the city life and may even have been in existence before the actual foundation of the city, but very little can be even guessed about them.

"What purpose did these huge mysterious brick-lined pits—ill-shaped, mutually adjacent, though wholly unconnected—serve? Manifestly they are of great age.

"They were not the dwellings of troglodytes; they can hardly have been brick or lime kilns from their general unsuitability for such use; nor granaries, nor refuse bins of the ancient city; scavengers. The most reasonable theory at present without further light would seem to be that this gravelly mound or hillock . . . was one of the cemeteries of ancient Anuradhapura, and the brick cists the actual receptacles for cinerary inhumation." (1909 *Report.*)

Across the road and stretching onward away from it the ruins of the mighty monastery of Puliyankulam claim attention. They are in very good preservation as regards the ground-plan, and would be an excellent model on which any-

one could study the disposition of the buildings included in one of these monasteries. Unfortunately a road named "McBride's Folly," after the unlucky originator, has been driven across a part of the monastery, cutting off an angle and thus destroying the symmetry of the plan, but in imagination it is not difficult to efface this and see it as a whole.

In arrangement Puliyankulam resembles Vijayarama, but it has no preaching-hall. At Vijayarama there is but one row of *piriven*, or monks' cells, all round, and here there are two. Inside the monastery wall all the usual features are to be found, the dagaba, pilimagé, viharas, etc. The walls of the platforms are singularly perfect, and show with great clearness the curious method of the old stone-layers, who, instead of finishing each block rectangularly so that any one fitted any other one, worked one block to fit into another like a puzzle, thus saving themselves trouble in one way, but redoubling it in another. This monastery has suffered perhaps more than any other from stones having been taken from it for culverts and other road-building purposes in the dark days before the archæological authority intervened. The jungle around was cleared out in 1891.

An inscription was unearthed in one place giving a date of twelfth year of Dappula V, which is A.D. 952, and two similar inscriptions were found in the dagaba, so that the age is well known.

Across McBride's Road, separated by only a short distance from the precincts of Puliyankulam, is an unnamed monastery which was apparently quite a separate institution. The ruins here are



THE HIGHEST STAIRCASE AT MIHINTALE.

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THE POOL OF THE FIVE-HOODED COBRA. p. 152

abundant and well worth seeing, especially for the sake of the singularly tall graceful pillar still standing erect. This attains a height of twenty-one feet and is slenderly proportioned. It gives that little note of distinction or singularity which is never lacking to each of these buildings, and bespeaks a quality of initiative and originality in that world of men who were responsible for them. Whatever else they might be, the Cingalese designers were no copyists or slaves to precedent.

Close by this last monastery, across the Jaffna Road, are the Government Experimental Gardens, where many useful experiments in growing grain and foodstuffs are carried on, to discover which are suited to the climate.

CHAPTER X

MIHINTALE, THE SACRED HILL

MIHINTALE is the Medina of Cingalese Buddhists ; this sacred hill, rising eight miles east of the city, was the scene of King Tissa's meeting with the great apostle and his consequent conversion.

But though this alone would cause it to be the goal of thousands of pilgrims, still more sacred to the average Buddhist does it become from the fact that the bones of the missionary rest here on one of the highest plateaux.

As in all other stories, told of the beginning of Buddhism, so in this one legend and chronicle are interwoven. On the very summit of the great hill is pointed out the boulder on which Mahinda alighted after his miraculous flight from India to convey the good tidings, and here, as history relates with probable truth, it was where King Tissa, in pursuit of the elk—sambhur are called "elk" to this day in Ceylon—encountered the stranger and listened to him.

The run of eight miles from Anuradhapura is a mere nothing to those possessed of a motor-car, and part of the way may be followed along the bund of Nuwara-wewa ; by horse and trap, supplied from the hotel, it takes longer naturally, and by bullock hackery longest of all. There is also

a motor-coach going to Trincomalee every day, and this passes Mihintale, but as it runs in the heat of the day, it is not very desirable ; the fare is five rupees each way ; the hotel trap costs eleven rupees both ways, allowing for staying a night. Whatever arrangement is made, a night should be spent at the very rough little rest-house if possible. As the only time for climbing the hill in comfort is early or late, a day-excursion does not leave sufficient time.

The direct road to Mihintale is singularly uninteresting and devoid of shade; it is jungle-lined almost the whole way, but the trees are mostly of no great height and have been cut back many yards on each side of the track to interfere with the playful little habits of jungle beasts who used to leap out on unwary passers-by, and even on the coach !

Not far from the bund of Nuwara-wewa, near Anuradhapura station, is the ruined monastery of Toluwila, a coined name, for nothing is known as to the past history of the place. It is indeed of no great interest, though the plan follows recognised lines and is especially clear in definition.

The whole eight miles between the sacred hill and the royal city were once covered by a carpet by order of King Bhatikabhaya (19 B.C.) (the king who entered the relic-chamber at Ruanweli), so that pilgrims might pass from one to the other without soiling their feet. The wonder of this fact is naturally felt with greater or less force according to whether the road has been traversed in a bullock-cart or a motor-car !

Mihintale is not seen until we are actually there,

stopping at the rest-house (second-class), where the keeper should be notified beforehand if meals or accommodation are required.

Next to the rest-house is the P.W.D. Bungalow, and just beyond its compound a path leaves the main road and strikes across to the top end of the small bazaar. Another path from here leads on across the road. This is exceedingly pretty, running through cleared out (1910) woodland. It passes on the right a hospital or dispensary with a stone "medicine-boat" (this is one of the only three of such receptacles hitherto discovered in Ceylon), being a slab hollowed out like the human figure. From an inscription on one of the guard-stones the conjecture as to this being a hospital is confirmed, the inscription (translation) begins, "For the benefit of the hospital," and ends, "any-one who takes by force what has been provided for this (hospital) will become a goat-slaying Rakkhasa"—a terrible curse! A little farther on, on the left, are the ruins of a vihara.

The first flight of stone steps bursts on one with the beauty of a dream fulfilled, a stairway leading to Heaven! Just such a vision must that have been seen by Jacob. Overhanging trees throw green shadows on the worn stone, and the shifting golden lights between may well be taken for the angel visitants. For twenty centuries or more the uncovered feet of innumerable dark multitudes have ascended and descended, their owners filled with reverent awe, and seeing visions as surely as did Jacob—visions of the mighty Buddha over-shadowing the island with his presence and of Mahinda, his apostle, alighting on the topmost

crag which towers up into the azure sky far overhead.

It is difficult to see more than a short way in front, but the top of the flight reveals a precipitous crag on the right heavily draped in foliage, crowned by a tottering dagaba of ruined brick, called Giribandha, which can be reached by a worn and steep path. In the cave below there is an important inscription signifying: "Cave dedicated to the community by the noble Asili, son of the righteous King Gamini."

Not many visitors ascend this eyrie. They usually pass on to the second flight of steps and thence to another, above which, on a flattish terrace, are several ruins. On the left the first seen is of fair size and contains two specimens of stone canoes. This is known as the "Alms Hall," and was doubtless the refectory for the monks living around.

"On the north side of the quadrangle is an elongated room, 45 feet in length, brick walled and shut off from the kitchens. This was probably the actual *salle à manger* where meals were served." (1910–11 *Report.*)

Just a little above it is a small vihara with mighty inscribed slabs, "tables of stone," of the time of Mahinda IV (A.D. 975), bearing a detailed record of temple privileges and regulations.

Right across the track is a third building, very small, known as the Halfway House, once a *Mandapaya*, or entrance-hall or porch. Turning right from this a little path leads downwards beside a dressed terrace wall, to one of the wonders of Mihintale, an open-air bath, much carved, where

a most robust and pugnacious lion, ramping on his hind legs, holds up the stonework. Alas, he faces north-east, and is so hemmed in by trees it is impossible to get a good photograph. Three attempts proved failures, and his majesty must remain unrepresented in this book. The stone bath itself has been carefully restored, and has a fringe of interesting carvings round it. Mr. Bell says of it :

> "There is probably no more handsome specimen of bold artistic work of its kind in granite to be found in Ceylon than this finely conceived piece of sculpture."

Notice in the panels the dwarfs fighting and boxing and wrestling, the lion figures, the dancing girl and others.

The lion is 7 feet 4 inches in height, and was pieced together with great ingenuity, having fallen altogether from his high estate. He stands out "in the round," and it is difficult to do justice to his extreme virility and audacity. Perhaps of all that we know of the habits of ancient Ceylon, the variety of architectural design bestowed on open-air bathing-places is the most attractive. The large pokunas, with their massive hewn blocks and carved steps and their charming little pillared dressing-chambers; the deep-cut, rock-hewn pools; and the most original single baths such as this and the famous lotus-bath at Polonnaruwa, all show care and design in this type of work which no people have ever surpassed.

From the Lion-Bath a jungle track leads onward, coming out on the road on the way to Kaludiya Pokuna (p. 156). However, the rest of the wonders of Mihintale have to be seen first.

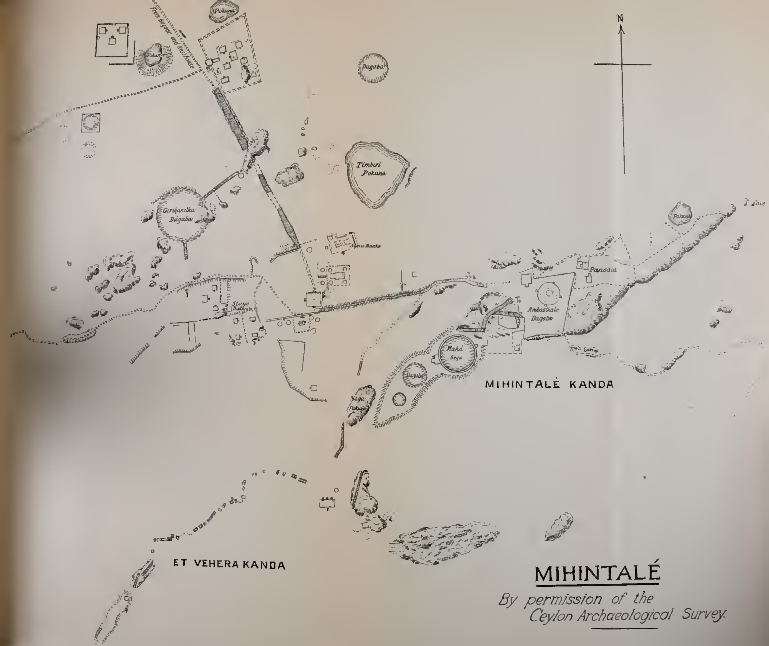
Returning to the "Halfway House," which lies across the original track, we see the remains of numerous viharas in and around it, and can explore as much as time allows. Then we pass on, up a flight of steps at right angles to those already traversed. This is even more entrancing than what has gone before. It is narrower and longer. The steps are shallow, but with great variations in the tread, here being suitable for a baby's foot, and there sufficient for a giant's. The way is fringed by huge maidenhair fronds hanging gracefully from every crevice, and the green sweetness of their growth is like the freshness of a spring morning. The steps were formed by King Bhatikabhaya, who reigned from 19 B.C. to A.D. 9.

From the top of this flight a terrace walk leads away on the right, along the side of a hill to the Naga Pokuna. This is a most beautiful walk, disclosing at every turn rolling views for miles over the jungle, which are enhanced by being seen between the drooping fronds of fairy-like boughs. The path ends abruptly in sun-blackened rock, and after a scramble the Naga Pokuna comes suddenly into sight. It faces due west, and on this evening it was lit up by the radiant glory of the setting sun in a cloudless sky, which showed up the black veins and streaks on the precipitous cliff face. Gradually some of these lines and streaks resolved themselves into a figure, and as the

eye traced them they outlined a gigantic five-headed cobra, cut in low relief, but with a sure touch, from the rock face; his body is said to continue beneath the water. Aggabodhi I (A.D. 564) built a "Nagasondi," and this may possibly be it. If so, this giant-hooded beast, rearing himself sheer out of the water, has so stood facing the sunrise for between thirteen and fourteen hundred years!

Passing the Naga Pokuna, it is possible, after rather a scramble, to come out on the highest part of the hill, Et Vehera Kanda. Here a dagaba was erected about the first year of the Christian Era to "cover a hair which grew on the forehead of Buddha over the left eyebrow."

But few visitors get so far as this. Returning again by the terrace walk to the head of the last narrow flight of steps, a short distance over the face of embedded rock brings us out on the plateau where stands the Ambastale dagaba in a small grove of palms almost surrounded by the monks' dwellings. We are now on one of the most sacred spots in the whole of Ceylon, and if, to European eyes, the white painted dagaba, surrounded by pillars, is not nearly so interesting as what has already been seen, yet the atmosphere of history and legend woven around this spot adds something to it that even the most casual must feel. This with Lankarama and Thuparama are the only three of this particular class of dagaba found at Anuradhapura. Here, however, there are only two circles of pillars, which are monolithic and about twelve feet high. The dagaba stands on a circular platform mounted by a flight of plain steps.



MIHINTALÉ

By permission of the Ceylon Archaeological Survey.

The eye of the faithful Buddhist, as he gazes on that bald crag behind the dagaba, sees in faith the figure of Mahinda alighting miraculously. The pilgrim passes up the rock-cut steps in a rapture of devotion to offer what he can before this sacred place. Returning once again, he recalls how the King while hunting was providentially led to the feet of the apostle, who was seated beneath a mango (*ambo*) tree just where the Ambastale dagaba now rises, enshrining, on evidence which even the sceptical cannot reject, the bones of Mahinda, who died 259 B.C.

We can afford to dismiss the 40,000 followers of the King as a pardonable exaggeration, and we can well believe it may have been the pursuit of a real elk, and not a "devo of that mountain" in its shape, which led to the encounter, but apart from these points we see nothing unlikely in the tradition. As a sample of the test of common sense applied by the holy man to his visitor, to discover if his understanding was sound, we are given the following catchy dialogue :

"Oh, King, what is this tree called ?

"It is called the ambo tree.

"Beside this one is there any other ambo tree ?

"There are many ambo trees.

"Besides this ambo tree and those other ambos, are there any other trees on earth ?

"Lord, there are many other trees, but they are not ambo trees.

"Besides the other ambo trees and the trees that are not ambo, is there any other ?

"Gracious Lord ! This ambo tree !

"Ruler of men ! Thou art wise !"

Thereupon the doctrine and precepts of the Buddhist faith were expounded to the King.

Here it was Tissa established the missionary at the head of a powerful monastery, placing the brethren in cells and rock-cut caves, some of which still exist and are used by the monks. One king after another delighted to honour the sanctuary, and probably in the deep recesses of the hill beyond the platform there are many caves and relics still unearthed. In the third century A.D. the monastery was in charge of the Dhammaruci brethren, a sect considered heretical by the monks of the Maha Vihara.

Opposite to the crag is another height up which steps lead to the Maha Seya Dagaba, now falling to pieces, and behind it are others still more dilapidated. To examine the full extent of Mihintale hill involves therefore no small effort, and more time than most people are able to allow, especially if they do not stay at least one night and utilise both evening and morning. It is as well to get up to the full heights the first visit, so that they need not be again climbed, leaving the lower parts, such as the Lion-Bath and the ruins round the Halfway House, for the second visit.

Mr. Bell says :

"In the recollection of Mihintale's hill and ruins, carried away by the ordinary visitor, the sights begin and end with the long stairways, the stone-boats and inscription-flanked vihara ruin, the picturesquely placed Ambastale dagaba, ringed in by graceful columns mid coconut palms, bringing to mind the similar Thuparama and

Lankarama dagabas of Anuradhapura; the bold roundness of Maha Seya dagaba which crowns Mihintale Kanda, the rock-cut Naga Pokuna, with, maybe—*si dis placeat,* if the guiding gods are complacent!—descent to that cool rock retreat, 'Mahinda's Bed' so called, and a cursory look at the ornamental, but far less ancient, 'stone bath' fatuously connected with the same apostle of Buddhism, near the half-way terrace.

"These are, and rightly, held to be the chief sights which, once rushed past, the normal tourist hugs himself with the comfortable self-gratulation that he has 'done' Mihintale thoroughly." (1910-11 *Report.*)

He goes on to speak of the "side-shows" off the beaten track, the numerous caves, other dagabas, and "not infrequent monasteries" to be discovered by those who search for them. Mahinda's bed is a flat shelf in the face of a precipitous rock commanding a widespread view.

Those who stay even one night at Mihintale will probably have time before leaving next morning to follow up the road leading southward from the bazaar past the Indu Katu vihara ruins with its dagaba, and so on to the mysterious caves, under the great boulders of *Raja-girilena-kanda,* to which the path opens off on the right, leading by a perfect fairy-land of beauty to the goal. Flights of stone steps ascend to the high cave-dwellings of the cliffs; "a better hermitage for Buddhist monks could hardly be selected than these caverns; they command from their peaceful secluded elevation unimpeded restful view across dark green forest and silvery tanks." There are also remains

of monastery buildings, but the caves are the chief interest. In wet weather bears still occasionally seek shelter in them. Further along the road on the left a rather inconspicuous path leads by a narrow opening to Kaludiya Pokuna, " the Black-Water pool," nestling beneath Et Vehera Kanda and *Anai-kutti-kanda*, " the Elephant Calf hill " ; it is interesting to note that the first two words of this name are Tamil, the last Cingalese.

The monastic buildings formerly stood all round this secluded glen, and even now their remains, tall pillars leaning this way and that, a strong wall, or a hewn bathing-tank may be found. But there is an eeriness about the place possibly accounted for by the evil demon who makes the tank his own. Our attention was called to him by a small boy from the village, who, in his own tongue, frantically implored us not to bathe (an intention which did not exist), and then motioned us to silence, and it was not long before the glassy silence of the lake, which mirrored the overhanging trees in perfect duplicate, shivered slightly, as the huge rounded back of a mighty crocodile, like a half-submerged submarine, rose to the surface and floated mysteriously across.

The monastery in this quiet retreat was of later date than the Mihintale buildings, but it was in occupation during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Mr. Bell says :

" A suggestion may fairly be hazarded that it was that *Hadayunha* (the ' heart-warming ') Vihara which Kasyapa IV (A.D. 912–929) built at the Chetiya Pabbata and bestowed on the Dham-

maruchika brethren, when he also prepared cells or caves—perhaps by improving some of those on Anai-kutti-kanda—'for the use of the priests that dwell in groves.'" (1911–12 *Report.*)

Certainly no situation could be more appropriate for such as had this habit!

CHAPTER XI

SIGIRIYA: A PALACE ON A ROCK

ANY one who takes the trouble to visit Sigiriya will carry away an impression that can never be effaced. This extraordinary granite rock rises sheer 400 feet from a sea of jungle; in itself it would be a remarkable geological phenomenon, but when it is remembered that a king in the fifth century built his palace on the summit, carrying the way up to it by a series of galleries that constitute a marvellous engineering feat even to-day, and that he ruled the kingdom from the inconvenient eyrie for eighteen years, the wonder of it is greatly increased. The rock lies some miles off the main road from Colombo to Trincomalee, and about twelve from Dambulla. From Anuradhapura the distance is about fifty miles either by the Habarane road (sometimes very bad and closed to motors) or by going near Dambulla. The rest-house (small) at Sigiriya is one of the prettiest in the province, but very out-of-the-way, letters being delivered only by special coolie and paid for accordingly. As may be imagined, therefore, that those who like luxuries, such as unsweetened milk in their tea, will do well to provide accordingly. On the forest road, before arrival, only glimpses of the magnifi-

cent rock are caught; however, it is in clear view of the rest-house.

In the evening, when the western sun smites full upon it, making the red granite shine out between the dark streaks, the effect is doubly striking. The black curved lines on the surface, result of the monsoon rains, serve to emphasise the overhanging or mushroom formation of this strange geological freak. The sides rise bare and abrupt from the waving foliage round the base, but on the summit one or two detached trees, of the apparent size of plants, stand out against the sky.

The road past the rest-house runs on to the rock for a distance of half a mile, and stops at the foot of the first flight of stairs.

As now arranged, the ascent presents no difficulty to any normal person not easily turned giddy by heights, and can be accomplished in about half an hour.

The first flight of worn steps leads upwards to the raised ground, impinging on the foot of the rock, and carry one straightway into a perfect Paradise. But this is best explored on the return journey.

The next flight of steps is what was known as the south entrance. This is rather misleading, as one naturally supposes it to be on the south side of the rock, instead of, as it is, on the western, but as a matter of fact the two ascents, north and south, were only so-called in relation to each other, and are both on the western face. The remains of the rough broken steps of the northern one can be seen when we begin the ascent on the southern. The upper stairs of the south approach

were excavated in 1895, the steps were relaid in 1909, also three staircases and landings were partially constructed, almost uniting the upper flights with the terrace below, from which the staircase ascent was originally made.

When the outer slopes were cleaned of rubbish, the substantial staircase of rubble stone set in mortar, over which we mount, was built up to save the scramble over the tedious ascent. In the old days this part of the ascent was carried by a staircase to the right, passing up a rock-lined gully from the tank. At the top of the stairs is a small platform, or view-point; leaving this on the right, we enter one of the grand galleries with a guarding wall, which, more than anything else, brings realisation of the engineering feat accomplished. This great gallery runs horizontally, and, with its extension, embraces about a quarter of the rock-circumference in its clasp.

The story of Sigiri rock, already outlined, is as romantic and wonderful as anything to be found in history.

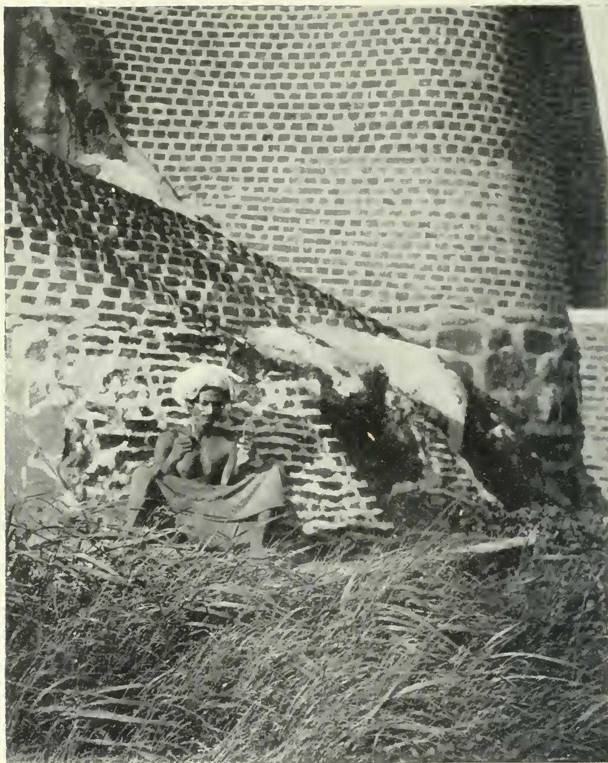
In the history of the island we have already met with King Kasyapa I (A.D. 477 or 511), and heard why he felt the urgent need of placing himself in some strong position to defy his brother's wrath (see p. 27). This parricide chose Sigiri rock, and flying there converted it into a stronghold from which he ruled the land, until he met his well-deserved fate. His engineers adapted the precipices in a marvellously skilful manner, and it is Kasyapa's galleries, restored, which are still used.

From the great gallery, which is broken here and there by short ascents of two or three steps,



Ceylon Archæological Survey Photo.

SIGIRIYA FROM THE NORTH SIDE



THE LION'S CLAW, SIGIRIYA.

p. 163

can be seen overhead a sort of pocket or shallow cave with the remains of some frescoes. As a matter of fact, many of the " pockets " on the face of the cliff have been thus decorated, but this particular cave, containing two " pockets," is the most important. When first taken in charge by the Survey, they had suffered terribly from the work of mud-nesting birds and bees. The cave is not accessible to the ordinary visitor, but the frescoes have been faithfully reproduced, and the reproductions can be seen in the Colombo museum. The work was done in 1897 by Muhandiram D. A. L. Perera of the Survey, and done under difficulties of which only a faint idea can be conveyed. He had to lie on his back on an improvised scaffolding to get a proper view of the originals, and working thus he took nineteen weeks to complete the task, fighting against heat, flies, fever, cramp, and other torments, and latterly the south-west monsoon and the driving wind, but he has carried out the task to admiration, and enabled hundreds, who would never have seen them, to get a faithful idea of the originals.

The scenes represent the ladies of Kasyapa's court, with their attendants, carrying offerings of flowers to Piduragala, the vihara on the conical hill to the north of Sigiriya. They are similar to the paintings in the Ajanta caves, except that here the figures, all female, are only three-quarter length. There are twenty-one figures in this cave. The outlines are full and rich, marred by no anæmic tendencies, and the colouring of the flesh varies from yellow and orange in the case of the mistresses, to the greenish-blue



supposed to indicate a dark-skinned race, in the case of some of the serving-maids. Both mistresses and maids are highly ornamented: "Coronets, tiaras, aigrettes, crown the head; flowers and ribbons adorn the hair and ears; neck, breast, arms and wrists are loaded with a plethora of the heaviest ornaments and jewelled gauds." Though at the first glance these figures might be taken to be nude from the waist upwards, a second will show that they are all clad in a filmy gauze ending at the neck.

After the manner of his kind, Kasyapa, when he had gained what he wanted by crime, began to think himself of good works. He built, among other things, this vihara near his rock to which his women-folk resorted, and called it after his two daughters. In connection with this we find one of those homely touches of which the chronicles are full. "Having eaten once of a meal of rice that a woman had prepared for him [the king] in the milk of coconut and ghee, flavoured highly with sweet condiments, he exclaimed, 'This is delicious! Such rice must I give unto the venerable ones,' and then he caused rice to be prepared in this manner, and gave it to all the brethren."

At the end of the gallery an iron bridge, carried round the cliff, supplies a missing part of the old work, and from it we mount by a staircase to a plateau, or lower level summit, projecting from the north side. There is a fine view of Pidura-gala and of the miles of jungle rolling around. To the west we can look down on the "Pulpit Rock," with its innumerable slots, and to the "Cistern Rock" near the foot of the ascent.

There are grass-grown mounds and heaps of red brick on the northern plateau, but all else is minimised by the sight of the stupendous cliff towering above, to be reached by a series of steps or iron ladders through a great brick-work mass at the foot. This is the famous "Lion Staircase House," once a mass of ruins but now restored. The only ancient parts remaining are the gigantic claws, about four feet high, on each side, made of brick partly plaster-covered. These give a measure for the original size of the beast, which was discovered in 1898 (see illustration, p. 161).

At first this huge pile of débris, with no shape or form, suggested nothing, but when enormous claws were excavated on each side, the clue was grasped. "Here then was a solution to the crux, which has exercised the surmises of writers, the difficulty of reconciling the categorical statements of the Mahawansa and the perpetration to the present day of the name, Sinha-giri, with the undeniable fact that no sculpture or paintings of lions exist on Sigiri-gala. That strange conceit, the 'lion-staircase-house,' the quaint grandly conceived break in the weary continuity of the tortuous gallery ever ascending, backed by the frowning rock, and crowning the highest terrace above the tallest forest trees, worthily emanated from the master-mind that designed that marvellous gallery and the complex citadel on Sigiri-gala."

By the end of 1904 progress in the ascent had been made possible, between 1905–7 reconstruction of all the high rising retaining walls which line the passage-way, with stairs and landings up

through the ruined Lion Staircase House to the foot of the iron ladders, had been made good.

"The curved and front line of wall represents the position once held by the paws of the colossal brick-work figure of the lion, whose plaster-coated claws still rest on the bay, clutching as it were, between them, the staircase, which mounted between the beast's paws and up through his body to the ladders." (1909 *Report.*)

The remarkable cleverness of the ancient engineering feat may be gauged by the fact that the men responsible for it actually gained the summit in winding fashion at the only place where it did not overhang, but left a possible entrance.

After the Lion Staircase House the steps change to narrow iron ladders with wide treads, but quite easy, and then the way turns north-east across the face of the vast rock, by a series of foot-holes cut almost horizontally, but with a slight ascent. Elderly or timid people or those who cannot stand heights might hesitate here, but the stout iron rail continues all the way, and gives confidence to those who attempt the feat. One last flight of ladders is scaled before reaching the top. The illustration (p. 160) is taken from the north and shows the Lion Staircase House. It is a telephotograph of the Ceylon Archæological Survey.

The whole summit is covered with ruins; granite steps and broken red brick walls marking terraces, passages, or apartments. All are on different levels, and the tall grass growing rankly, soon covers up what has been excavated, and makes any attempt to trace out the ground-plan difficult.

"A mere plan of the excavation on the summit of Sigiri-gala must entirely fail to bring out the rise and fall of the several terraces, and particularly the strikingly sudden drop from the higher level area on the west to the open courtyards, etc., north and south of the central pokuna."

This grass is full of tiny sharp "spears," and it is best to wear boots while ploughing through it.

To find the *gal asanaya*, the celebrated granite throne, discovered in 1895, keep along the eastern side, where it can easily be discovered facing full towards the rising sun.

In my rambling round the top I was lucky enough to come upon a gentleman of the country, lightly clad, who was willing to stand and give scale to the objects taken. My Madrassi "boy" eagerly volunteered the information, "He very respectable gentleman, in his own home he dress in many clothes, here he in his holiday clothes." I felt it in my heart to envy him!

The simplicity of the throne is very attractive; the pink granite is worked in strong plain outlines without ornament of any kind, and its simple grandeur suits the altitude and the far-reaching sweep of the view before it.

From this point the limits of the outer city can be traced on the ground-level far below, and the tank or lake is well seen. The place is practically dead, but we can picture in the bygone time the busy hive of workers, the artificers, masons, carpenters, swarming up from their huts like ants about their work, to the towering heights where the king lived in that gold-wrought, silk-clad

luxury described in the Mahawansa. The comings and goings of these men in obedience to the royal orders and commands, the constant changing of the soldiers and ministers, and the arrival of the tax-collectors with their money, would make a never-ceasing stream of ascents and descents along the winding levels of the marvellous rock. There, high above all, on his rose-coloured throne, sat Kasyapa, administering justice while he carried the black spot of death in his heart ; we cannot believe his judgments erred on the side of mercy !

Always, from the heights looking out over that tangled sea, where the jungle-fowl call and the incessant " poop, poop " of the woodpecker arose then as now, the King would watch for the glitter of spears and the crash of an oncoming army breaking its way through all impediments to bring down vengeance on his guilty head.

And it came ! Whether, weary of his stately self-imposed imprisonment, Kasyapa recklessly descended from his fortress to meet his brother, or whether, lulled by the security of his eighteen years of power (just as long as his father had reigned), he began to lose his fears, and was caught off the alert, we do not know. But the Mahawansa tells us that he did face his elder brother Moggallana in the plains not far from Kurunegala, where the " two armies met like two seas that had burst their bounds." A fierce conflict ensued, and when Kasyapa saw that he was getting the worst of it he cut his throat, a not uncommon means by which the vanquished escaped the indignity of being made prisoner.

Moggallana therefore became king. He estab-

lished himself at Anuradhapura, and Sigiriya fell into decay. It is associated only with the reign of one king. For all his delay in revenging his father's death, Moggallana was not a cold-blooded man; it is said that when he saw those who had followed the slayer of his father, the sight drove him into such a red rage that he gnashed his teeth furiously, so that one hereafter protruded and he acquired the name of *Rakkhasa*, meaning the demon. There has been a great deal of discussion over the interpretation of this passage; Mr. Wijesinha supposes it to be an allusion to the curved teeth or tusks that demons are popularly supposed to possess.

Passing from the granite throne southward, we come to the great tank on the summit, which supplied the water to the population living there; this is quite a fair-sized piece of water even now, though choked up by reeds, and when kept clean must have provided an abundant storage replenished by the torrential monsoon rains.

We can wander round the whole summit, noting the backbone of passage in the centre, with byways starting from it on each side like ribs.

When we finally descend, by the same road we came up, we can visit below the flat rock called the Audience Hall, near the Cistern Rock, and in between the two, underneath the latter, see an odd little cave-shrine.

The place is a perfect fairyland; bushes with fern-like fronds waist and shoulder high complete an illusion of bracken-covered ground, and amidst them rise other bushes and shrubs completely covered with small orange-coloured fruit (*Limonia*

alata) growing amid shining green laurel-like leaves; there are great white trumpet-shaped flowers (*Datura fastuosa*) and the *Cassia fistula* with its yellow bunches like giant laburnum. The ground is carpeted by a sensitive plant with tiny pink spiky flowers. Huge lumps of rock are flung anyhow amid green bowering foliage. Great trees have grown in some instances on the bare summits, and encompassed the sides in a network of scaly roots which stream downwards to seek sustenance in the ground. As I stood drinking in all the wonderful detail, a bird, like none that I had ever seen before, sprang into sight, chasing a brilliant-hued butterfly; it had a long forked tail, and its radiance reminded me of the monk's story in *The Golden Legend*.

> "And lo! he heard
> The sudden singing of a bird,
> A snow-white bird, that from a cloud
> Dropped down."

"This species is called the Ceylon Bird of Paradise, but is really a kind of long-tailed flycatcher. There is a similar bird, only terra-cotta in hue, which is rather more common. The Cingalese call them *Redi-hora*, meaning cloth-stealer, for as the tail is five times longer than the body, it looks as if the bird were flying away with a long piece of cloth." [1]

It is a famous shooting country all round here, bears and leopards, sambhur (elk) and many other large animals range in the depths of the jungle, but we shall hear more of these at Polonnaruwa.

[1] *Eleven Years in Ceylon*, by Major Forbes. (Bentley. 1841).

The dagaba at Sigiriya, not more than a hundred yards from the driving road, and three-quarters of a mile from the rock, was opened out and investigated in 1910, and in the treasure-chamber the principal object found was a small *Maha-meru-gala*, or round pedestal of stone, 1 ft. 3 in. in height, varying from 5½ in. at the bottom to 5¼ at the top in diameter. It has three raised rings around it and is completely carved with human figures. The chief interest lies in the fact that the scenes depicted are village scenes showing houses and family life.

The size of the bricks used in the dagaba carries testimony that it was built several centuries before the Polonnaruwa stupas.

Besides this there are, around in the jungle, many evidences of that larger city which grew up at the foot of the rock. There are an immense number of caves in the gigantic boulders, and there are the remains of five "moated islands" lying to the west of this outer city. These may have been pleasure houses, or pavilions, with the earth dug out around them to make them into artificial islands for the adornment of a great park such as princes and people loved.



CHAPTER XII

POLONNARUWA: THE JUNGLE CITY

THERE is great diversity of opinion as to the respective charms of the two royal cities, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. In favour of the former may be counted its much greater antiquity. From 500 B.C. on to the middle of the ninth century A.D. Anuradhapura held the proud position of the capital, and even when, owing to the incursions of the Tamils, the kings then removed the seat of Government to Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura never lost its glamour of peculiar sacredness. Polonnaruwa remained the capital, with a slight break, up to the end of the thirteenth century, or only about a third as long as the sister city.

Anuradhapura can also boast a far greater extent of ruins, and though excavations at Polonnaruwa are more recent, it is not at all probable that it will ever be able to rival her in this respect. For sheer beauty of landscape Anuradhapura must be accorded the palm. In other respects the claims balance equally; some people find the access by railway and the comforts of the hotel at the older city preferable, while to others the remoteness and inaccessibility of Polonnaruwa, and the simplicity of its rest-house, are additional

attractions, also it certainly can boast far greater charm in its wealth of animal and bird life not yet frightened away by too much civilisation. Among its monuments also are one or two unique in themselves, and unlike anything dreamed of elsewhere ; such are the Wata-dagé, Floral Altar, and Lotus Bath, which are worth coming across the seas to visit on their own account.

Polonnaruwa is not the real name of the place, which should be Toparé, from the great sheet of water, Topa-wewa, on whose shores it stands. The present name is not very ancient, but has somehow ousted the older ones. Major Forbes, writing in 1828–30, calls the place Polonnaruwa, and he is followed by Sir E. J. Tennent. Mr. Bell characterises it as " a word of doubtful Elu origin." In the Mahawansa it is called Pulatthi, or Pulastipura.

The road from Sigiriya to this place of many names runs almost all the way (forty-three miles) through forest glades, and is lined by jungle foliage. In the early morning, while all is deliciously fresh and drenched by dew, every new vista is a delight. All forms of the *Ficus*, including the mighty banyan, overshadow the way. The main road to Trincomalee is rejoined some six miles after leaving Sigiriya, and left again at Habarane, which is twenty-eight miles from Polonnaruwa.

About halfway between Habarane and Polonnaruwa a side road leads, at the distance of about a mile, to one of the largest and most beautiful tanks in the island, Minneri, where it is proposed to make a sanctuary for the wild birds who haunt the shores. It is not only bird life in great variety

which may be seen here, but wild animals of many kinds steal down to drink in the shades of night; the marks of leopard, cheetah, bear, wild boar, deer, and even wild buffalo and elephant, to say nothing of smaller fry, may be picked up by those accustomed to "tracking." The lake, though shrunk from its original size, still measures some twenty miles in circumference. The shores are broken and much wooded, so the whole expanse cannot be seen at once. This splendid work was done by Maha Sena (A.D. 275), the "apostate King," who did not support the old-established Buddhist monks in Anuradhapura, whereupon they fled to Rohuna, and were in exile nine years. It will be remembered he was the king who began to build what is now called Abhayagiri dagaba at Anuradhapura. "He thus performed acts of both piety and impiety."

Minneriya may certainly be counted to him to overbalance many of the latter sort, for its beauty and usefulness remain to-day, over 1.600 years later, as fully evident as when it was formed. The King bestowed it, and the ground which it waters, on the monks of his new dagaba.

Regaining the main road, abundant evidence of the wealth of animal life sustained by the fertilising water of the lake can be seen. A covey of jungle fowl, their golden plumage gleaming, scuttle into the bush; a shy jackal races ahead of the car, his brush wildly waving as he realises that for once he has encountered something swifter than himself; monkeys plunge and swing overhead, and possibly a hare darts across the road.

Before reaching the rest-house at Polonnaruwa

the road runs by some of the finest of the ruins, the great temple of Thuparama being especially noticeable, standing high on its platform.

The rest-house is only about half a mile beyond, and is built on a promontory stretching out into the great " tank," or lake, Topa-wewa, from which the place derives its real name. Unfortunately the Public Works Department, to whom the building of the rest-house was entrusted, was for once seized with a passion for artistic effect, and planted the little building to face a superb view without considering that it brought the front verandah full face to the south. In such a climate this is a fatal mistake, and under any sort of sun the verandah is utterly intolerable to an ordinary mortal.

Rest-house charges are very reasonable in Ceylon, and the food, as a rule, is sufficient, though in a place so out-of-the-way luxuries can hardly be expected. There is, however, no baker living here, and those who cannot " make shift " with milk-biscuits had better bring their own bread or a tin of rusks. Everything else is supplied at the rate of six or seven rupees a day. Any one wishing to stay longer than three days must apply to the Government Agent at Anuradhapura. Accommodation is limited, and in an ordinary season motor-car parties are many, so it is well to engage rooms beforehand. The road ends in the village, and beyond is pure jungle. There is, however, a post-office and a daily delivery of letters.

Besides the attraction of the ruins, many people come for the shooting, which is regulated by the Government. There is a close season for deer—

Sambhur, Barking, Spotted, Red, and Paddy-field varieties—also for grey partridge, painted partridge, Ceylon spurfowl and teal; this is from June to October inclusive. The shooting of an elephant costs a resident in the island 100 rupees and a non-resident three times as much, but a licence to shoot a recognised "rogue" may be obtained for the asking any time. A buffalo costs respectively fifteen and twenty rupees, and a game licence is only five rupees to residents, but forty-five to non-residents.

Stories of a rogue elephant which had troubled the district for over a year, and seemed to bear a charmed life, were afloat when I arrived at this enchanting place. Mr. Livera, J.P., the Revenue officer, had had an encounter with him. At the time, Mr. Livera was suffering from fever, and was getting along with difficulty near Polonnaruwa assisted by two natives, when suddenly they exclaimed "elephant about here" in their own tongue, and deserted him promptly. With great difficulty, being in a weak state, he managed to drag himself up into a small tree; then one of the men came back and told him that that tree was covered with a creeper elephants particularly fancied, and he had better get down. Faint with weakness he dragged himself to another tree, a larger one, near, and had no sooner climbed it than the elephant appeared, and sure enough went straight to the little one he had abandoned and began to pull down the creeper, which is of a well-known species, called colloquially "elephant-creeper," from the partiality these animals show for it.

The elephant went off after a while, but presently returned and walked round and round beneath him, looking up at him viciously, and trying to reach him. Mr. Livera had with him only a shot gun, but with this he fired several times, and at last frightened the elephant away. A considerable time passed before he heard his men calling him cautiously " with monkey noises " so as not to attract the beast back ; he replied, and finding all apparently safe, descended ; but no sooner had he done so, than the elephant suddenly appeared again, and he had only just time to get back to the tree. After this he and the men, who were not far off, shouted as loud as ever they could to attract the attention of the villagers, for all this had happened within a mile of the village. Presently they managed to make themselves heard, and a number of men came out with one or two firearms, and drove the beast off, so as to free the victims, but they did not kill him.

Shortly after a man was cycling along the only road carrying a bag full of money to pay coolies, when an elephant, probably the same, burst out on him. He ran the cycle into the jungle and upset it ; the " rogue " made for him, and, dashing over him, tore off the sole of his boot with its foot in passing. He looked up to see its hindquarters disappearing in the forest ! Otherwise, by a miracle, he was not much the worse.

While I was at Anuradhapura, having gone on from Polonnaruwa, I heard the end of the story. The elephant began to make himself more and more of a nuisance, appearing on the public road, and actually killing a boy there. But his

time had come, and he was killed by a lucky shot from the forest officer, who happened to be in the district.

The excitement of big game episodes does not, however, end with elephants; Mr. Jayasekera, of the Archæological Survey, recently shot a large fat leopard within half a mile of the rest-house. The skin measured eight feet from nose to tip of tail, the tail being three feet. The illustration shows him with his trophy, and behind him his tracker with a canoe-paddle, on the verandah of the rest-house.

It was due to Mr. Jayasekera that I was enabled to see a family of wild buffalo at large. He took me in a dug-out canoe, with outrigger, across Topa Wewa one day, and we were lucky enough to see at fairly close quarters a remarkably fine group of wild buffalo. We saw only the cow first, standing on a bluff, then made out a dark-coloured calf beside her. We manœuvred the canoe so as to run into a creek as near as possible compatible with safety, and just as we had landed a magnificent bull rose up from the high sedge, where he had been lying at the side of his mate. He was a splendid creature with spreading horns, entirely different in his fine proportions from the pig-like domestic water buffalo. I deeply regretted not having brought my camera, especially as a further turn revealed a very young mouse-coloured calf lying beside the other. We walked to within fifty yards of the group, and then deemed it wiser to go on, as we were not out after big game that day.

The lake is usually spangled by white birds and a flight of pelicans is not unusual. Cormorants sit



DWARF-STONE AT VIJAYARAMA.

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SKIN OF LEOPARD SHOT NEAR THE REST-HOUSE, POLONNARUWA.



THE ROYAL PALACE, POLONNARUWA.

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all day in the outlying rocks, and the water abounds in crocodiles. There are plenty of lulla in the lake, a fish with firm flesh which makes good eating, also many other species, some quite large.

The wet season at Polonnaruwa is usually from October to the end of December, and at this season it is easier for sportsmen to find deer to shoot, but the roads are also often rendered impassable at the same time, and inquiry must be made beforehand as to whether they can be traversed at all.

The popularity of Polonnaruwa increases yearly, and only the difficulty of reaching it without a motor-car prevents its being inundated with visitors. The beauty of its scenery, the chances of sport, and the fascination of its amazing antiquities present a variety of attractions difficult to resist, and sufficient to ensure great efforts being made to overcome the obstacles to their attainment.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EPIC OF PARAKRAMA

Polonnaruwa differs from the older city in that its extent is accurately known, the line of its walls has been traced, and even in some places the walls themselves laid bare. More interesting still, the building, considered now, without much doubt, to have been the chief or central royal palace, is still standing.

The city ruins lie almost in one straight line running north and south, and are reached either from the road, which passes beside them, or by means of excellent little paths, cut and kept in order by the Archæological Survey. The authorities are not here hampered by the dilatoriness and slackness of the Buddhists, as none of the sacred sites are in their hands, but all under government supervision and control. Their preservation can therefore be carried out in the best possible way without obstacles.

At the south end of the ruins is the Potgul monastery and the great rock-cut statue popularly known as that of Parakrama, and at the other the latest recovered temple, that of Demala-maha-seya. The rest-house itself and some of the ruins near it lie a little outward to the west, as do also the remains dug out of the bed

of the tank itself, and others on its shores supposed to have been a summer palace of the kings. But all the chief buildings are very much in a line and easy to find, though the outlying ones exact a good deal of walking.

"The city rampart runs on the north for over 1,000 yards, to the east 1,800, to south nearly 1,000. On the west side the bund of Topa Wewa served as the city's protection for some distance, the wall being carried on it along the former contour of the bank for 1,100 yards or so. Including a cross-ramp of 500 yards and the citadel confines, the city ramparts (exclusive of the unwalled tank bund to the west) covered a circuit of about 6,850 yards or little short of four miles." (1906 *Report*.)

One of the kings called Aggabodhi III (A.D. 623), built a palace at Polonnaruwa and was here smitten with incurable sickness and died. It was not till the time of Aggabodhi VII (A.D. 781) that it really became the capital. Succeeding kings lived and died here, building tanks and hospitals. Then the Tamils conquered Polonnaruwa and established themselves there until the reign of Wijaya Bahu (A.D. 1065), who reconquered the island for his race and again established the Cingalese line there. "It was he who re-built the city to a large extent, including a most beautiful vihara and fine rows of dwellings and a sanctuary for the Tooth-relic; he also made the fortifications secure—in fact, it is said he built the wall surrounding the city" (see p. 29).

But there had evidently been a wall there before,

because, in his assaults on the city when it was held by the Tamils, we are expressly told that the Tamils had retreated into the city on the approach of the king's troops, and, having shut the gates, climbed on the walls and towers to continue their resistance. It was over six weeks before the Cingalese prevailed, and when the news of the Cingalese success reached the King of the Cholyans in India, and he heard how his generals and the governor had been beaten, he made no more attempt to reconquer the island.

Wijaya Bahu celebrated his coronation in Anuradhapura, which shows that the peculiar sacredness of that city was still reckoned above that of the newer capital. The king had to contend with rebellions among his mercenaries, and he built many viharas, and new tanks, and repaired Minneriya, which had run dry. He gave also to the monks numerous benefactions, causing them to be supplied in the winter "with cloaks and fire-pans and divers drugs in abundance." He also presented "bulls for the use of cripples" and "rice for ravens, dogs and other beasts." Truly the record lacks nothing in living detail!

This wonderful king was also a poet, and his poems were quoted from tongue to tongue by his subjects. But on his death his youngest brother attempted to seize the inheritance, joining forces with his nephew, the eldest son of the late king's sister, and these two tried to keep out Wikrama Bahu, the rightful heir according to our notions, who in his father's lifetime had ruled the province of Rohuna. But Wikrama Bahu was too strong for them, and recovered the capital. Unfortun-

ately he was a " bad " king, who brought dissension and distress upon the country, because he seized the gems and gold and lands belonging to the temples, and so disgusted his subjects that a whole body of the monks contrived together to escape to Rohuna, carrying the priceless Tooth and Alm's-bowl relics with them.

Meantime the king's three cousins, the sons of his aunt, and their ally his uncle, continued to give him great trouble, but were unable to prevail against him. It was from the eldest of these brothers, Manabharana, who had married a daugher of Wijaya Bahu, that there sprang the great branch of Parakrama, whose name is to Polonnaruwa what those of Tissa or Dutugemunu are to Anuradhapura.

During Wikrama Bahu's reign, these princes kept up the show of a royal house, and bided their time in the outlaw country of Rohuna. Manabharana had been long without a son, though he had two daughters. At last by signs and omens he gathered that a mighty son was to be born to him, which prophecy was duly fulfilled, and the welcome child was called Parakrama. He was more than half a Tamil owing to the intermarriages of his forbears, and it was perhaps from this strain that he derived the vigour and resisting power in his blood. Far from resenting the advent of his young cousin, the old king, Wikrama Bahu, welcomed one of whom such great things had been foretold. In those unsettled days, when personal might was necessary to a successful holding of the kingdom against the forces both from within and without which threat-

ened to tear it asunder, any scion of the royal house whose personal qualities were above the average was likely to be chosen king over the heads of those nearer in actual relationship.

Wikrama Bahu knew well that his own elder son, Gaja Bahu, lacked the qualities "to acquire that which he hath not got or to retain that which he hath got." His other son was born of a mother of inferior rank. So he began to look on the son of his cousin Manabharana as his successor.

Of the wonderful career of the boy Parakrama the chronicles can hardly say enough. His life is like an epic. He went from triumph to triumph, and no feat was beyond him. No less than twenty-nine chapters of the Mahawansa are devoted to his prowess and his deeds, though sometimes elsewhere numbers of kings' reigns are disposed of in one chapter. From his earliest days he felt himself marked out to reunite the kingdom instead of allowing it to be split as it was into many districts, under many scions of the royal house, and when he should have reunited it he hoped to rid it of the foreign invaders and re-establish the ancient glory of Lanka.

He saw how his uncles had been content to hold small fragments of the land under their authority "like village landlords" instead of desiring the whole. They had fought indeed, but feebly and spasmodically and without result.

To fit himself for the great achievement he had set before him, the boy began at a very early age to study all that was known of arts, science, religion, and anything else that could possibly come in usefully. His brilliance of mind and body

was readily acknowledged by his own uncles, his father's brothers, who seem to have been quite willing to look on him as the future ruler of the land, though one of them had himself a son, another Mahabharana.

Meantime Wikrama Bahu died, and his rather weak-natured son Gaja Bahu succeeded him. This man was not so readily inclined to give up his inheritance as his father had supposed, and he made ready to defend himself against his cousins. By this time Parakrama's father was dead also, but his two uncles thought the time favourable for another bid for the capital, and attacked Gaja Bahu. However, they were ignominiously defeated. But this did not daunt Parakrama, who was growing up, and made no secret of his intention to secure the capital, and rule as sole king in the land so soon as he should be strong enough. After his father's death he had lived with his elder uncle, who had no son, and treated him with great affection. He loved him so much " he oft times kissed the crown of his head." It is little touches like these that bridge the centuries and make the story alive for us to-day.

While still a youth Parakrama determined to set forth by himself to visit his kinsman Gaja Bahu at Polonnaruwa, in order to find out how matters lay there. But he knew that his devoted foster-father and uncle would not give him leave to go for fear that harm might happen to him, so he slipped away secretly, telling a band of comrades to meet him at a pre-ordained place. Most of these youths were faint-hearted and tried to dissuade him, but he went on until he arrived at a

village, which was in charge of a trusted general of the "king" his uncle. This general came and did obeisance and then, very naturally, sent a secret message to the king that the prince was there. And when Parakrama heard of it he was very angry, and caused the unfortunate general to be killed by his followers.

Then, with a very natural touch, he felt bound to remain where he was to take his uncle's anger "standing up," lest his uncle should think he had fled from the fear of it, so he waited a few days. But eventually, because his presence led to riots and to the wildest rumours, he went on.

A very curious situation arose, for his uncle, though not altogether angry with him for his misdeeds, desired to have him brought back, and in a mixture of anxiety and annoyance sent armed men to capture him. The reckless boy, who had by this time gathered armed followers himself, met and defeated these forces, and passed out of the borders of his own country into that belonging to King Gaja Bahu. The account of his adventures is very minute. In one place we are told he "fastened his hair-knot firmly" before springing forth to join in a fray, which shows that fashions in hair-dressing were the same in his race then as now!

Gaja Bahu was of a timid disposition, and judged it best to receive his young warrior-kinsman in a friendly manner. Thus the lad first entered the great city with which his name was to be for ever associated.

Alas, Parakrama, who entered the city on the king's own elephant, and stayed for a considerable

period as an honoured guest in the palace, employed the time in a most thorough system of spying. Tamils and Cingalese were alike to him, he employed any agents he could trust as instruments in this work, sending them forth as snake-charmers, dancers, pedlars, and even as hermits or ascetics, to gauge the feeling of the country, and prepare the way for the ultimate conquest on which he had set his heart.

Parakrama's elder sister was already married to his first cousin Mahabharana, but he sent to his own country for his second sister and had her married to King Gaja Bahu so as to lull completely any suspicions that monarch might have entertained as to his own intentions. Meantime the prince was not even above doing spy work himself. He pretended to be chased by an elephant, and ran into lowly huts so that he might converse with the people ; he went deer hunting in the country round so that he might mark the best approaches for an army ; it is hardly wonderful that, in spite of his bride, Gaja Bahu began to be suspicious !

Numberless tales are told of the prowess of the prince while he stayed in Polonnaruwa. Once he frightened away an enraged buffalo " with eyes red and glaring in their sockets " by merely shouting in its face ; he killed a fierce she-bear with cubs, and a wild boar.

At last, however, his near relatives could do without him no longer, and his own mother came to fetch him home. He went with her, for he felt the time was not yet ripe for his great *coup*.

He had no sooner returned to his own country than his adopted father died, rejoicing in having

seen the beloved youth once more. Parakrama took up the reins of government in the district, and proved himself an able administrator. It was his ideal, "Let there not be left anywhere in my kingdom a piece of land, even though it were the least of the yards of a house, which does not yield any benefit to man." So he built tanks and irrigation works and saw to planting and sowing. And he turned himself to the thorough development of his army into an efficient fighting force.

When he considered he was sufficiently equipped, he began by seducing the generals of King Gaja Bahu and getting them to deliver up to him the outlying territories over which they held command. Some came over to him, and those who would not he attacked in their strongholds.

It is amusing to hear that on one occasion men skilled in house-breaking and armed with "sharp-edged deers' horns" were sent forth to break down the walls of a fortress.

Gaja Bahu naturally began to take measures to defend himself; he tried to suborn one of Parakrama's generals with rich presents of "jewels and ornaments of great value and divers garments of silk and linen," but the man ruthlessly disfigured the envoys and passed the bribes on to his own master.

Everywhere Parakrama's arms were victorious, though there were many sharp battles. At length Anuradhapura was taken by him and he turned his attention to Polonnaruwa.

He had established himself in a great fortress at Nalanda, and began operations from there.

It is interesting to read of his preparations for victualling his troops. " Rice mixed with acids, plantains, rice roasted and beaten into cakes, and divers things to eat in great plenty. He also sent many thousands of bamboos, each formed into one long channel replenished with water and pierced with holes and stopped at both ends, so that many persons could drink thereof at one and the same time." Manabharana, his cousin, had up to this time sided with King Gaja Bahu, but now seeing which force was likely to be victorious, he changed over.

Gaja Bahu sallied forth from the capital to meet his foe's advancing army, but was worsted and retreated again behind the walls. And when the enemy appeared outside, the gates were promptly opened to them by Parakrama's spies. The armed men rushed in and seized the king, and sent word to their ruler that he was a prisoner. Parakrama had the grace to order that he should be well treated. However, the soldiers got out of hand and did a vast deal of looting, and the town was thrown into great confusion. In the words of the old scribe it was " like unto the ocean that is disturbed by the tempest at the end of the world."

Now Manabharana thought he would take a hand on his own account, and knowing that Parakrama had not yet arrived at Polonnaruwa, he appeared there with his small band of followers and assumed authority, seizing King Gaja Bahu and treating him cruelly by " depriving him of food and rest." So the captive sent a despairing message to his first captor, saying, " I have no

other refuge but in thee." It is a proof of the great personal charm of Parakrama that in spite of his treachery this cousin of his seemed to bear no ill-will toward him, but almost to admire him for his strength and large-mindedness. And he was justified, for Parakrama, on receiving the message, thought "Verily hath he suffered all this grievous pain because of me," and went at once to his rescue.

When Parakrama entered the city, the monks all joined together and besought his mercy, telling him that the king was old and had no son to succeed him, and beseeching him to let him finish the short remainder of his life in peace, and Parakrama, who for all his scheming had a good heart, was prevailed upon, and returned to his own country for a while. Before he went the wretch Manabharana was gathering together his men to attack him, but Parakrama cared "not so much as a blade of grass for him."

And Manabharana was utterly defeated, and as all the main fords of the river were held by Parakrama's men, he had to cross secretly by means of a little known ford. He rallied his forces, and for a while had some success, but was pursued relentlessly by his terrible foe and at length again fled by a secret ford, and died "by reason of a disease that had come upon him through fear of the King Parakrama."

But before this Gaja Bahu had also died, after having reigned two-and-twenty years.

Parakrama was crowned A.D. 1164 (according to Don M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, 1153), and on that day the deafening sound of divers drums was

terrible ; and the elephants, decked with coverings of gold, made the street before the palace to look as if clouds had descended thereon with flashes of lightning, and with the prancing of the steeds of war the whole city seemed on that day to wave even like the sea. And the sky was wholly shut out of sight with the rows of umbrellas of divers colours, and with lines of flags of gold.

Parakrama is described as "Lotus-faced" and with "eyes that were long like the lily," which sounds more of an Egyptian than a Cingalese type.

He then set himself to develop his country. He built a great chain of ramparts round Polonnaruwa, and a palace called the Vejanta. He built houses for each separate religious sect, and he had a theatre made for singing and dancing, and a great hall of assembly with a throne in it. "Likewise also a charming palace, supported on one column which seemed to have sprung up, as it were, by the bursting of the earth. Its floor of gold was lighted only by one chandelier." He built a great temple for the famous Tooth Relic ; it shone with roofs of gold and had in the upper storey a great white room.

"And the great and wise king caused divers roads to be made in that beautiful city ; and many thousands of mansions of two and three storeys high and the like were built on the borders thereof. They abounded on all sides with shops filled with goods of all kinds. Elephants, horses, and carriages passed without ceasing along the roads, which were crowded every day with people who continually took part in great feasts." The city had fourteen gates.

Then the wise ruler started repairing Anuradhapura, which was in a terrible state.

Mahabharana's mother, Sugala, had joined herself with the rebels, and gave them the Tooth-Relic and Bowl-Relic. This distressed the king greatly, and he sent a host of men to recover them before they could be carried to India. They were retrieved and received back with great joy, and the king made a road leading to the Temple of the Tooth "as smooth as the palm of his hand," and planted trees along each side of it. But there was still a great deal of fighting to do against both rebels and Tamils before the kingdom was finally in his grip.

And even then some of the petty potentates of India insulted his messengers, so that he sent out an army against them, first having a fleet of ships built so that "all the country round the coast seemed like one great workshop busied with the constant building of ships," and among the stores put aboard were quantities of coats made of iron and skins of deer for resisting the arrows, and medicines carried in bullocks' horns to salve the wounds made by the poisoned arrows, and pincers to pull out the tips of the arrows when buried in the flesh and broken off.

So the next few chapters are full of accounts of fighting, in which we are told that the arms of Parakrama had great success, subduing the country of the Pandyans, the ancient enemies of his house.

The king tried to unite the Abhayagiri fraternity and the Maha vihara, but he found the Jetawanarama set of monks utterly worthless and degraded them.

The three great thupas at Anuradhapura were covered with thickets " wherein lurked tigers and bears," but Parakrama had them cleared and rebuilt, and he caused the Brazen Palace to be reset, with its 1,600 pillars, and he made tanks and buildings without end and " bodhi groves."

Parakrama reigned for thirty-three years. He had several wives; the chief of them was Lilavati, and one of the best-loved was "Rupavati—who drew upon her the eyes of the world"—and " among the many hundreds of women who were in the inner chambers of the Palace, she was beloved the most," and, " save her own husband, she regarded not, as much even as a blade of grass, any other person."

She was loving, skilled in dancing and music, and had a keen intelligent mind; she was chaste and wise and pious and beautiful.

We wish that we could identify among those fourteen gates of the city " the exquisite King's gate, the delightful Lion's gate, the broad Elephant's gate, the lofty Serpent's gate, or the sparkling Water-gate," but it is to be feared they can never now be traced.

Parakrama was succeeded by his sister's son, Wijaya Bahu. The glory of Lanka departed in the reigns of weak succeeding kings.

Major Forbes[1] thus sums them up:

" Of the six kings who followed Parakrama Bahu, four were murdered, one died a natural death, and the sixth, Chondakanga, was deposed and had his eyes put out, by order of the minister

[1] *Eleven Years in Ceylon.* (Bentley, 1841.)

Kirti, who had married Leelawatee, and now raised her to the throne, while he exercised the supreme authority under sanction of her name. These six reigns only occupied ten years."

Lilivati survived Parakrama; and three times she was on the throne for short periods, and three times was she deposed.

The invaders from India were getting more ruthless and determined; they came again and again, and proved themselves more than a match for the islanders.

Once again the priests fled to the mountains with their treasures before invading hosts. But under Parakrama Bahu II the city recovered a little of its ancient splendour, though when he came to it walls were split and reeling, and trees had rooted themselves in sacred places.

Its prosperity was short-lived, and the Cingalese kings were driven to carry on what semblance of royalty was left them elsewhere. At one time their capital was even as far south as Cotta, near Colombo. The most celebrated of these short-lived capitals, on account of its ruins, is Yapahuwa, not very far from Anuradhapura, of which the history is given elsewhere (see p. 245). At any rate, after the reign of Parakrama Bahu III (A.D. 1288), Polonnaruwa was no longer the capital city.



SIVA DEVALE, NO. 1 (COMMONLY CALLED DALADA MALIGAWA). p. 205



THUPARAMA TEMPLE.

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CHAPTER XIV

POLONNARUWA : THE CITADEL

THE rest-house stands on ground that was once part of an extensive and beautiful garden or park laid out by King Parakrama the Great. As he began to reign in 1164 (or 1153) and reigned thirty-three years, he was contemporary with our English King Henry II. This great park was called *Nandana*, the "Park of Heaven," and as it enjoyed all the advantages of the fine climate of Ceylon, it must have been charming indeed. It was filled with flowers, and flower and fruit-bearing trees. Swarms of bees were attracted by the smell of the jasmine and other scented blossoms; peacocks spread their gorgeous tails and screamed as they strutted about the grass; and the Indian cuckoo made his voice heard. The area was broken up by artificial pieces of water, on which grew the lotus, and any one who has seen the red and white lotus growing together will understand the richness of that scene! The park was enclosed by railings decorated with rows of images carved in ivory. And actually some of the buildings set in it and minutely described in the Mahawansa are to be seen to this very day. . . . Turning out of the rest-house we pass to the left under the shade of a great bo-

tree, and follow a roadway parallel with the tank side. Below this, on the right, are various ruins: the remains of the sluice from the lake, and of baths and pokuna. A little further, on the left-hand side, are some ruins showing not much more than the outlines of the basement of a large building. Here can be traced an octagonal hall with sides fourteen feet in length. This opened into a rectangular hall, which in its turn communicated with a square water-tower by means of a fan-shaped drain on raised brick-work. The floor of the hall was laid in concrete, and sockets cut to receive wooden posts show that it was sixteen pillared. On one side were seats. The whole is obviously a bathing-house of a special kind, and the water for use therein must have been raised by artificial means to the top of the tower in order that it might spray forth with force. Now what does the Mahawansa say ? This garden of Parakrama's was "ornamented with a bathing-hall that dazzled the eyes of the beholder, from which issued forth sprays of water that was conducted through pipes by means of machines, making the place to look as if the clouds poured down rain without ceasing—a bathing-hall, large and splendid, and bearing, as it were, a likeness to the knot of braided hair that adorned the head of the beautiful park-nymph. It also glittered with a mansion of great splendour and brightness such as was not to be compared, and displayed the beauty of many pillars of sandalwood, carved gracefully, and was like an ornament on the face of the earth. A hall shaped like an octagon, and a beautiful and pleasant hall, formed after the fashion of the

beautiful coils of the king of serpents, adorned this park."

Notice the meticulous accuracy of the description so faithfully corroborated by these remains. "An octagon hall, *and*" another hall; the pillars of wood; and the arrangement for spraying the water. The fanciful comparison likening the octagon hall to the knot of hair worn at the back of the head is not nearly so far-fetched as are many.

The description of the pleasure garden goes on to include a summer pavilion, which was built on a place like an island, where the water flowed on two sides, and there—not so far in front of us—we have it. The ruins of a pavilion stand on a boss or mound with a deep depression all round. This building was a "snow-white" house, and to it was attached a hall "for displaying divers branches of knowledge and the arts," a museum in fact! Near it was a "swinging hall" in which was a swing hung with tinkling bells of gold.

In this same park was a bath overlaid "with stones coloured like unto the body of the serpent Ananta" and another with "paintings of divers colours." No doubt these had their position among that group of baths now in ruin close to the rest-house. The coloured stones have all gone.

Before proceeding to the "pavilion of the island" there are other ruins which must be passed. The first of these stands right in front of us, a curious little isolated block, which, owing to the fact that it had neither door nor window, is supposed to have been a Mausoleum. Very little is known about it, though some of the sky-

blue paint edged with terra cotta still adheres to its panels, showing that when freshly painted it must have been a striking object.

The first large building on the right after this, just beyond the bungalow of the Archæological Survey, is the Audience Hall, and close beside it, but with its axis at right angles to it, is the Council Chamber built by King Nissanka Malla (1198), if the inscription found in it is to be trusted. The pillars in this are unusually thick, and a small stone lion is perched on a pedestal at the main or northern entrance. It was near here that the mighty stone lion, which once supported the throne of the king, was found. Nissanka Malla was of Kalinga lineage, and came third in succession after Parakrama the Great. Parakrama's immediate successor was his nephew Wijaya Bahu II., who was dethroned and killed by a man of the Kalinga race; the usurper was able to call himself king for five days only, before a stronger than he, of his own people, put him to death and reigned in his stead. Nissanka had been sub-king under Wijaya, and there is nothing to show that he was not loyal to his sovereign. He reigned for only nine years when his turn came, but he managed to impress his own name on almost every bit of stone building or monument in Polonnaruwa. He certainly did a good deal of building on his own account, including a temple for the Tooth Relic, and several viharas. But perhaps his chief claim to remembrance is the mighty Lion-Throne, which he designed. This huge beast, six feet high from the sole of its foot to its crown, and of stupendous girth, is in its style distinctly reminiscent of Assyrian

work. It is suggestive that the only other building at Polonnaruwa possibly showing traces of Assyrian influence is the Sat-Mahal-Prasada, also the work of Nissanka. What connection had this king with Assyria ?

The lion statue was discovered in 1820, completely covered with débris, some distance from the Hall, where it is conjectured it must have been flung when hurled down by Indian invaders. When it stood at the south end of the hall, and the king in all his glory of silk attire was raised upon it to receive his ministers in conclave, it must have looked truly royal. Some fifty years after the discovery of the great beast it was removed to Colombo Museum, where it still remains. This is one of the instances where the authorities might well restore the " spoil " to its original place. As every one knows, in the case of delicate objects which cannot be properly protected in outlying districts, there is much to be said for their preservation in museums. In cases also where treasures of sculpture or architecture are so far removed from the beaten track as to be practically lost to view to all but the few, the argument for transferring them to the nation's storehouses, where they may serve to educate and enlighten thousands of people, is a strong one. Neither argument holds good in this particular case, the Lion of Nissanka is no puny beast, and the monuments at Polonnaruwa are well looked after. Here, at the very door of the Survey bungalow, no harm could come to him, and the many visitors who yearly are drawn to the ancient city from the quarters of the earth would fully appreciate

the spectacle of the grand beast placed where he originally stood.

The task of restoration would no doubt be difficult, for the transference of the lion was a terrific undertaking. The first dray on which he was placed dropped to pieces beneath his weight, and where he fell there he lay for a considerable time. When once more the Herculean task was renewed and he was carted off by elephants, bridges broke beneath him, and in order to extricate him a tunnel or cutting had to be made down the steep banks of the river which held him as in a trap.

Finally he reached Matalé and was transferred to the railway. His journey by road had been made the occasion of a festival, and a procession had rolled up from the villages through which he passed. Garlands were flung liberally around his unwieldy neck, and flowers were strewn before him. As far as transport is concerned the nearest rail-head is still Matalé, but motor traction would solve the problem for the remaining part of the way, if he were to retraverse the ground.

There is not much else to see in this direction, though the ruins of the king's summer quarters, the "Palace of Coolness," can be made out at the end of the lake a good distance away.

Returning to the rest-house we can go forward to see the rest of the ruins by the road on which we arrived. This quickly curves into the main road, going (left) back to Habarane, and (right) to the village, just round the corner, where it ends. Immediately opposite, across this road, is a steep bank with a path rising up it. This leads directly

to one of the most interesting sights in Polonnaruwa. By mounting the bank we pass into the citadel, some twenty-five acres in extent, the kernel of the city. Facing us are the imposing ruins of a huge mass of brick-work, rising from an innumerable congeries of smaller buildings. This is quite unlike anything yet encountered. It was once supposed to have been the prison or fort of the city, but is now considered without doubt to have been the king's own residence, the Royal Palace.

A long time may be occupied in tracing out the labyrinth of rooms remaining. Five months in 1911–12 were devoted by the Survey authorities to clearing out the mass of growth and débris under which this magnificent historical relic was almost buried.

Passing at once to the centre of the main block we see two large apartments with a passage between. The room on the south was walled in from this passage, but that on the north was open to it. The walls of these rooms are over ten feet in thickness. Both on the inside and the outside will be noticed large niches or slots, which evidently once held gigantic beams of wood. These supported the upper floors, and outside held up a verandah or projecting balcony running all round the first floor. The rooms above occupying the similar space may have been cut up into smaller sections or not, we have no means of knowing, but they were well lighted by large windows, for the hollows left by these are quite obvious even to the amateur eye. The palace was evidently three-storied, and Mr. Bell conjectures that the upper-

most storey was built in corbelled vaulting and flat-topped, and that it had probably a central tower, after the pattern of Thuparama Temple a little to the north. The large rooms in the middle are flanked to east and west by halls, that on the east being by far the larger, measuring in fact 102 feet by 42. It had thirty-six columns to support the roof, without counting those on the main building.

Outside it is a range of small rooms or cells, which is continued right round the main building in four sides of a square. The double walls between which these rooms lie are 9 feet 3 inches apart, and this gives a uniform width to all, but they are cut up into different lengths or sizes for no apparent architectural cause, some being as much as 13 feet 6 inches in length, and others as little as 4 feet 6 inches—mere cells. But every one of them, except those at the corners, had at least one window.

Another very interesting feature of this stately ruin is the staircase leading to the upper floors; this is broad, easy, and in good preservation. Outside, around, and scattered at irregular distances, are the remains of other buildings, the use of which can only be conjectured. From what we can see the ideas on the subject of housing royalty in the twelfth century in Ceylon were very much in advance of those in England at the same period. The spaciousness of the central rooms, probably occupied by the king and queens, is much beyond the usual living-room accommodation assigned in Norman or Early English examples of towers or castles. And the indications of privies, water-

supply, and so on indicate very advanced civilisation; while we know that bathing occupied a prominent place in the daily routine and diversion of daily life with the Cingalese long before baths were ever considered to be necessary in England. Climate of course had a good deal to do with the last item.

For a full description of the Royal Palace and its adjacent buildings see the 1911–12 Report of the Ceylon Archæological Survey, which also contains a capital ground plan.

If this is the palace originally built by Parakrama (and possibly altered by Nissanka), we are told that it had seven storeys and one thousand chambers supported by many hundreds of beautiful pillars. We need not take these figures too seriously. Number as well as size denoted grandeur to the Cingalese mind, and the "thousand" is obviously merely a symbol to denote a vast number. The palace was surmounted by pinnacles, and its gates and doors and windows were made of gold. In the king's bedroom there was always a perfume of flowers, and this hardy warrior went to bed by the light of golden lamps from which were suspended strings of pearls.

It is difficult to recall the mind from the contemplation of so much luxury and splendour to the scarred ruin standing in the citadel. But though all trace of decoration has vanished from the brick, we can still see something of a contemporary artist's work not far away. By going forward a little we catch sight of a perfect gem of a little Council Chamber or pavilion, lying to the east of the palace. I prefer to call this the

" Elephant Pavilion," for its wonderfully life-like elephants in panels are the feature that remains in the mind. The pavilion rises in three stages, or platforms, each a little smaller than the one below. The sides of these are broken into panels and carved. The lowest with the largest panels is devoted to elephants, the next above shows conventional lions with upraised paw, and the one above that merry little dwarfs. There is a moonstone at the remaining entrance ; lions rest at the head of the steps, and the pillars on the platform are richly carved, not alone as to capitals but on the sides. At a little distance the whole looks as if cut in a peculiarly soft yellow sandstone, but it is all of granite, which, owing to the red quality of the surrounding soil, tends to weather to this unlikely hue.

It is to the elephants we return after looking at the rest. They are all about the height of a man's knee, and are designed by a master mind. They are still or slowly moving or galloping forward, and each single one is a perfect model of his action. Trunks and tails express that action as well as the body and legs. The man who did them had studied elephants in every pose and gloried in his details. The building was excavated in 1905, and is, on a much smaller scale, after the pattern of the Council Chamber on the promontory. A path to the south-east of this pavilion winds through a hedge, once the boundary wall of the citadel on this side ; it passes through a hole, probably representing an ancient postern gate, and drops to a sunken paved space outside. This is the *Kumara Pokuna*, or Prince's Bathing-place,

with a small vihara beside it. The water was conveyed into the bath through the mouths of crocodiles, fashioned as spouts, of which one remains. Three lions, modelled in an upright position, standing on their hind legs, lie on the ground neglected. The flat spaces on the tops of their heads show that they once supported something ; what was it ? Possibly the round stool or seat of stone which now lies beside them. This has been referred to as the pedestal of a statue ; if so, it seems strangely out of place here. Is it not possible to picture instead the prince of the time seated on it, while his attendants poured water over him, after the Ceylon fashion of bathing to this day ?

The shrine close to the bath displays no feature of special interest.

The path leading onward to the rest of the Polonnaruwa ruins goes northward between the Palace and the Elephant Pavilion. It is one of the neat well-cut paths made by the Survey for the use of visitors. The undergrowth has all been cleared out on each side, leaving visible the stems of the larger trees, from the branches of which come the songs of innumerable birds. The ceaseless shrilling of crickets is an undercurrent of sound always present in this Eastern world, and it so repeats itself in the ear that the silence of northern lands at first strikes one as unpleasantly still.

At a little distance the trees resemble many of those with which we are familiar in England ; there is the Ceylon oak, with its tufts of red leaves, closely resembling an English oak. These sprays of young growth are very noticeable in this country

where nature ceaselessly renews her efforts. There is another tree remarkably like an ash with pinnate leaves, the fashion of which is very common with trees in Ceylon, and there are many dark glossy, thick-leaved species. In Parakrama's park were planted coconut, mango, jak, areca, palmyra, jasmine, plantain, and many another, whose descendants flourish still in the same neighbourhood.

Beneath the trees the ground is covered with the feathery leaf of a little plant like our wood anemone, and here and there appears the familiar twinkle of a mauve periwinkle, and so we pass to the limits of the citadel-enclosure on the north.

CHAPTER XV

A NECKLET OF ARCHITECTURE

On emerging from the citadel boundary the splendid group of buildings which lies in the very heart of the city is seen ahead, standing up on a raised platform, but before reaching any of them attention is arrested by a comparatively humble little temple, in Hindu style, of one storey only.

This is so satisfactory to the eye in its proportions and general outlines that it seems natural to sit down and study it carefully. Popularly known as the *Dalada Maligawa*, the Tooth Temple, this little gem of architecture is officially called *Siva Devalê*, No. 1, being undoubtedly Hindu in its origin, though it may possibly for a while have given shelter to the much-revered Tooth. *Devalê* means a temple in which devils or demons are worshipped.

At Polonnaruwa the constantly growing ascendancy of the Hindu religion over the purer Buddhist belief is noticeable everywhere. As the swarms of invaders from South India grew greater, and as each receding tide left behind individuals who settled down and brought their own beliefs and habits to influence the dwellers in the land, Buddhism lost some of its distinctive peculiarities and

the gods of the Hindus were more and more worshipped in its temples.

"The architecture of this handsome ruin is markedly Dravidian (Southern Indian); not a finer example exists in Ceylon.

"How did a shrine so manifestly self-declared a temple of uncompromising Hindu design and worship—that moreover of its most antagonistic cult Saivism—ever acquire the appellation of *Dalada Maligawa*?

"Can the *devalé* . . . have been for a season allowed to receive and shelter the sacred tooth pending its permanent lodgment in a Buddhist shrine worthy of its sanctity? If so—the hypothesis is just possible, but assuredly not more—the tradition may have clung to the structure and been handed on down to the present day unquestioned. And at that we may leave it." (1907 *Report.*)

There is a strong barbed-wire fence around the area in which the temple stands; this is to keep out the wild beasts of the forest, who have done as much damage to some of these beautiful shrines as ever the rank growth of vegetation has. The precaution is not unnecessary even now, though the increased number of visitors is driving the wild things ever further and further afield.

When Major Forbes visited Polonnaruwa in 1828, he discovered that—

"bears in numbers find shelter amongst these ruins, and this sanctuary [Siva Devalé] had only been vacated by some of them on hearing the noise of our approach. The guides, although armed with

axes, as they advanced to the entrance often looked uneasily around, and requested that our guns might be kept in readiness. Before entering the building, the guide, standing on one side of the doorway, put forward his head and gave a loud call; after a sufficient pause to admit of any brother bruin, who might be within, to answer the summons, or appear in person, we were permitted to enter."

The style of the temple can better be gathered from the illustration (p. 192) than from any description. The innermost shrine is roofed, and the carved capitals of the pillars in the outer one are worth noting. On the exterior south wall is a tiny panel showing a learned *guru*, or teacher, distinguished by his high cap, seated in conference with a pupil.

At this temple in 1907 some bronze images of great beauty were unearthed; the finest is of Siva as the "Cosmic dancer" dancing in a ray of fire. This is about three feet high and of most beautiful workmanship; it can be seen, with the rest, in the Colombo museum. It is the opinion of an expert, Mr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, D.Sc., that these bronzes may have been cast in Ceylon, but belong to the South Indian school.[1]

Reluctantly leaving behind this singularly attractive little temple we pass on to a group of buildings so original, differing so much from one another, and showing so much imagination in design, that it is safe to say there is nothing like them elsewhere in the world.

The wall which upholds and bounds the plat-

[1] *Description of the Bronzes of Ceylon.*

form on which they stand has been repaired; we mount it by a flight of steps, near a deep well. High above rises the magnificent temple Thuparama, of the twelfth century, completely Hindu in design. This, before it was taken in hand by the Survey authorities, was in a lamentable state, and it was doubtful whether it could be saved; but difficulties have been overcome, and it now stands proudly, with vaulted roof, tower, and walls complete. For Hindu architecture it is singularly simple, and lacks the superfluity of ornament which so often spoils such work. In this the Buddhist influence may be traced. The exterior is decorated by pilasters forming panels in which are raised in relief models of Hindu temple entrances; these, with plain mouldings and a string course and lion frieze, are almost all the ornament. The walls are of immense thickness, and on going inside the comparative smallness of the interior is instantly noticed. The outer chamber is roofless; from it an interior stairway ascends to the parapet and the roof of the inner shrine. In this shrine are several images of Buddha. There is very little to note, and perhaps the greatest interest lies in the superb view from the summit, whence can be seen the rest of the buildings in this strange group, including that unique monument the *Wata-dagé*.

This name means "Circular Relic-house," and it is quite probable that this was the real *Dalada Maligawa* built by Parakrama the Great:—

"A round temple of the tooth-relic, built wholly of stone and adorned with beautiful pillars, stair-



SAT MAHAL-PRASADA.

p. 212



JETAWANARAMA TEMPLE.

p. 219

cases, walls, and such-like, and ornamented with figures of the lion, the *Kumara* (horse-man-demi-god), and the *Hansa* (goose), and covered with many terraces and surrounded by divers kinds of lattice work."

The building is formed by successive terraces, or platforms, circular, one rising from the other. The first and outer wall is about shoulder-high, with a plain coping and only one entrance—on the north. A wide terrace, or platform, is left between it and the next circular wall, which is most highly decorated. It has four entrances at the cardinal points, with guard-stones, moon-stones, makara-scroll, and decorated risers of the stairs, but all differing from one another in detail. Of the beauty of some of this work it is impossible to speak too highly. The entrance on the east is perhaps the finest. The wall running between these entrances is in four courses and highly carved with lions and dwarfs. The top course is divided into panels with a unique design of floral pattern. This pattern at two of the entrances is pierced; here without doubt we have the "lattice-work" of the Mahawansa. At each end of the panels rise graceful pillars with carved capitals. Inside these, and separated from them by a short interval, is the last wall, which is of red brick and rises to a considerable height. The entrances pass through it, and reveal the platform within, where there was once a central dagaba, now a shapeless heap. Around it, with their faces to the entrances, are four seated Buddhas, three complete and one broken. The difficulty of

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restoring this wonderful monument to something like its pristine beauty can hardly be understood by those who have not seen at least pictures of it as it was, with the stones scattered and split asunder by trees, the images broken and buried beneath débris, the columns and their capitals disintegrated and far apart. The work done in this and other instances by the Archæological Survey at Polonnaruwa is worthy of all praise. It is real restoration, needing infinite care and patience, and the complete subordination of preconceived ideas.

The Wata-dagé is carried out in granite with the exception of the inner brick wall and dagaba. No conception of the colouring can be formed until it is seen. The granite, here as elsewhere in Ceylon, has weathered in places to a rich yellow, while the handsomely carved dragon-entrances retain much of their cold grey-green ; inside rises the dull red of the weathered brick.

A similar building, still in utter ruin, can be seen near to the northern limits of the city (see p. 233), and there is another at Medigiriya, twenty miles away. Perhaps these "circular-relic-houses" were a conception emanating from the mind of Parakrama Bahu himself.

A word now as to the moonstones of Polonnaruwa. The peculiarly beautiful specimen on the north side of the platform may well serve as the text. It will be seen to have first, outside, a ring of floral design, then a row of small sacred geese, next a most spirited row of elephants following each other trunk to tail. These again are succeeded by a semi-circle of galloping horses with tasselled collars and unduly depressed bodies.

They rest on a further scroll, this time very broad, which encloses the lotus centre. Thus the details differ very considerably from the fashion at Anuradhapura. The rings of animals are of one sort only, and bulls or lions do not appear. Perhaps the Anuradhapura style was considered out of date, or the meaning of the mystic combination of the four animals had been lost; whatever the reason, it is strange to find that the moonstones at Polonnaruwa conform in broad lines always to these new rules. The animals are not mixed in kind, and though the relative positions of the semi-circles of elephants and horses may be reversed; with one exception, it is they and not the lions and bulls that appear. Yet the peculiarly grotesque type of lion, beloved by the Cingalese, appears abundantly at Polonnaruwa on balustrades and friezes, which shows it was not because of his abnormality he had been abandoned!

Just to the north of the Wata-dagé is the *Ata-* (or *Hata-*) *dagé*, "House of Eight Relics," which is much in ruin, with a broken figure of Buddha at the north end of the central aisle and a bit of frieze showing dancing girls at both the exterior ends of the south wall.

Lying to the east of this is a massive block of stone which cannot be passed by. This is the *Gal-pota*, or Stone Book. It is in the shape of a gigantic *ola*, or palm-leaf book such as the priests use. But its dimensions are extraordinary, for it measures nearly 27 feet in length, by 4 feet 7 inches in breath, and it varies in width from 1 foot 4 inches to 2 feet 2 inches.[1] It carries an inscrip-

[1] *Fine Art in Ceylon*, by V. A. Smith.

tion of King Nissanka Malla (1198), recording his virtues and good deeds and general pre-eminence. At each end is a small relief showing Sri (the goddess of good fortune) and two elephants. On the stone itself we are told that this mighty block, which weighs at least twenty-five tons, was brought from Mihintale, about sixty miles. When the difficulty of transporting the stone lion from the Council Chamber in modern times is considered, the magnitude of the feat is apparent.

The inscriptions of Nissanka Malla are to be found everywhere at Polonnaruwa. If they are to be believed, this king alone was responsible for every bit of architecture now remaining, but it is much more probable that he, coming to the throne after the great buildings of the mighty Parakrama had partly fallen or been ill-treated and devastated, rebuilt or restored many of them and vaingloriously recorded them as his own achievements. He may even in some instances have claimed what already stood intact; even so did the kings of Egypt efface with their own cartouches those of their predecessors whenever they could safely do so.

On the other side of the *Gal-pota* is one of the most curious buildings still left standing. At present it is six storeys high, but was once seven, as the name *Sat-mahal-prasada* signifies. It resembles nothing so much as a child's house of bricks, with each ascending storey less in area than that below. What use it can have been remains a mystery, for though it looks fairly spacious outside, it is almost completely filled up inside; the passage which seems to run round it

being stopped up with masonry. It seems that it could only have been habited by snakes, and as I peered into one of the entrances, the very first object I saw was a cast snake skin, giving form to the vague idea. The outside staircase rose only to the first storey. The style is Kambodian, and it shows a marked resemblance to some of the temples of Kambodia. It has also been compared with the "seven-storeyed temples of Assyria." [1]

The originator may have been one of the queens of Parakrama, spoken of as "Chandravati," who also built the Potgul vehera (see p. 242), as an inscription there relates.

Passing back again between the Wata-dagé and Ata-dagé, note beyond the latter the ruined building with a gracefully carved column still standing. This is a good example of a very popular design. A *gana*, or dwarf, supports a full round pot from which springs a creeper, flowing alternately to right and left to the limits of the stone, so as to form with its stalk great semi-circles enclosing foliage.

Then we see perhaps the finest of all the gems in this mysterious necklet of architecture which decorates the terrace. This is the *Nissanka-lata-mandapaya*, the Floral Altar or "Hall of the Flower-Trail." A space of some 34 feet by 28 feet is enclosed by an artistically designed post and rail fence of *stone*. But this is no sample of a "Buddhist" railing, for it lacks the essential points of that style. It runs round a stone platform

[1] *History of Indian Architecture*, by J. Fergusson and J. Burgess. (Murray, 1910 edition.)

from which rise most curiously designed pillars. In the centre of the platform or altar slab is a small dagaba. The outer railing is entered by a porch with stone posts and roof-slab. Words fail altogether to give an idea of the daintiness and originality of the details which mark this architectural monument. The idea of the lotus flower runs through it all. The cone-shaped heads of the posts are the exact shape of those unopened buds, which, to this day, are offered for sale in piles outside every shrine. The head of each pillar standing on the inner platform originally showed carving representing an opening lotus. Some of these still remain. It may be remarked as strange that countries so widely different in climate and conditions as Ceylon and Egypt, the one so richly moist and the other so curiously dry, each relied so much on the same flower, the lotus, for their conventional ornament in architecture (see p. 224).

Here we may trace the lotus everywhere, in copings, on the heart of moonstones, on pillars and panels. In Egypt more than half the capitals of the mighty columns show symbolic representations of this flower.

It seems possible that the vainglorious Nissanka was really the originator of this famous altar with which his name is for ever associated, for inscriptions on the coping and pillar fragments definitely proclaim it to be so.

The resetting of the posts and pillars, the refitting of the broken fragments so as once again to reveal this flower-shrine as it was, has been a labour requiring infinite patience, but the result

is well worth it. It is safe to say that even if all other of the Polonnaruwa monuments eventually fade from the memory of those who have seen them, the Floral Altar and Wata-dagé can never be forgotten.

CHAPTER XVI

SACRED SHRINES

To continue from the Thuparama group to the buildings lying further northward at Polonnaruwa involves a certain amount of walking. Before we pass outside the city limits there are various scattered objects worth seeing. The path made by the Survey authorities runs due north from the Sat-mahal-prasada, and from it on the right at intervals run several other small paths. One of these leads to a ruined dagaba—*Pabulu Vehera,* the third in size at Polonnaruwa. North-east of it another Hindu temple, *Siva Devalé,* No. 2, on the same model as No. 1. By good judges it is considered an even more perfect specimen of the type. In 1909 the roofless vestibule was rebuilt and the dome reset. Few go out of their way to find it, and what chiefly impressed me was its air of utter solitude. A spider's web, like a cable, barred the entrance; the mud nest of a bird under the eaves was within reach even of a boy's hand; and the slough of a snake lay on the threshold.

The track leading back from it into the main path runs parallel with the city wall, through a gap in which—once the north gate—we pass.

In section here the thickness of the ancient wall, oft-times so hotly defended, can be seen.

After this there is a comparatively long interval devoid of important ruins, where the smaller growth of wood is still uncleared and huge creepers, like great hawsers, twisted and looped and coiled, link the trees together. In among them are grey pillars, leaning this way and that, the same colour as the trunks of the trees, and hardly to be distinguished from them. Monkeys abound, both the large grey-faced wanderoo and the pert little rilawa peering and peeping and vanishing like shadows at every step. Leopards are sometimes seen sitting for a second to view the intruder and then stealthily departing; porcupines abound, their quills can be picked up frequently, but being night feeders they are very rarely apparent. Snakes are not very frequent; the larger sorts, such as cobras and pythons, are met with in the outer jungle, but have withdrawn before the presence of man. Hares occasionally dash across the path, and deer may venture as near to the arch-enemy as this, but mostly they are not to be met with for some miles further on.

At last we break out into the open and see to the left the first of the two great dagabas of Polonnaruwa. This is Rankot dagaba, and it appears small after the larger specimens at Anuradhapura, though actually ranks not behind, but amongst them, being fourth in size of those that are known, coming after Abhayagiri, Jetawanarama, and Ruanweli, but before Mirisaweti. Another name for it was *Ruanwelle-saye*, the "Place of Golden Dust" (Tennent), which links it up as identical with

Ruanweli. It was built by Parakrama's second queen between 1154–86 (see p. 243). It is mentioned as "the great golden stupa" because it was topped by a golden "umbrella." The circumference at the base is 555 feet; the original height was 180 feet. In 1885 the first effort was made to clear out the trees which were tearing to pieces the brickwork, and in 1905–6 the effort was repeated and carried further. The work of eradication proved very heavy, and was attended with no little risk. Some of the roots were as thick as a man's thigh, while the high walls of brickwork outlining some of the shrines or chapels were too insecure to permit of strong blows with full-sized axes. The pinnacle on its square base at the top has been preserved, and shows up above the jungle from miles off, appearing from the far end of the great tank in surprising fashion. Vegetation has now once again clothed the dagaba, but will not be allowed to attain dangerous dimensions.

To the north lies an immense field or open space showing the former extent of the attached monastery, and at the end towers the imposing mass of the ruined temple of Jetawanarama. The principal ruin, *Baddha-sima-prasada*, the "House of the Elder," is a fine building with four stair-entrances furnished with moonstones, the design of which runs mainly on the same lines as that described at the Wata-dagé; but there is an exception, for on that at the southern entrance is an additional belt, representing lions, which appears within the line of geese, or hansas. This seems to be the only exception to the recognised fashion

in Polonnaruwa. The building itself rose from a basement of unusual size, and the outer walls were pierced by lancet-shaped windows. The pillars remaining are plain. The interior walls show signs of having been coloured in panels. At the north-east corner of the terrace were three splendid wells, or cisterns, affording a capital water storage.

"He [Parakrama Bahu] caused a stately house of three storeys to be built for the Elder there, with halls of exceeding great beauty and many rooms of great splendour, and adorned with a roof of pinnacles."

Even in its ruin it still retains the quality of stateliness. The imposing red mass of Jetawanarama overlooks this great space of ruins which suggests a battlefield. The temple is 170 feet long, and, seen from the east, where the whole length of the aisle, up to the stupendous headless figure of Buddha at the end, can be seen in a vista, it suggests one of the venerable roofless abbeys of England.

Jetawanarama seems to have been a generic name for monasteries, and it is odd that it should here and there, as in this case and at Anuradhapura, have become attached to one particular building. An inscription on a slab at the front entrance calls it "*Lanka-tilaka*," which brings to memory the lines in the Mahawansa: "He [Parakrama] made there the standing image of Buddha of the full size, which was delightsome to behold, and called it Lanka-tilaka."

The Mahawansa also records: "He built the great vihara called Jetavana as if he displayed before men's eyes the magnificence of Jetavana [Buddha's

chief residence]." The temple was thoroughly restored by Wijaya Bahu IV (A.D. 1275). It is supposed to have been built originally on the model of that designed by Buddha himself at Kapilavastu, hence the reference above. The main entrance is reached by broad sets of steps, of three each, separated from each other by an intervening space. Each set has its own guardian stones. The risers of the steps are carved with *ganas*, but the guard-stones themselves show warders with only seven hoods, which seem to have been the height of fashion here, while at Anuradhapura nothing short of a nine-hooded guardian would be considered dignified in so important a position. Peculiarly interesting are the outer faces of the balustrades, with the huge form of the grotesque lion and the figure of a guard beside him (see p. 224).

When this important ruin was first tackled by the Survey authorities it was in a terrible state, and the interior was filled almost to the tops of the walls with the rubbish which had fallen and the vegetation which had sprung from it. Small wonder that the harassed commissioner in his diary records "the débris seems illimitable"!

The mighty statue of Buddha which occupies the west wall of the shrine, including its pedestal, once reached 44 feet 10 inches, being thereby the tallest statue in Ceylon. It is now headless, but the illustrations in Major Forbes's book (1828) and Sir E. J. Tennent's *Ceylon* (1860) show a head and face. The feet and ankles were also broken, but have been repaired. The tall octagonal towers which flank the entrance are imposing

even in their ruin. On the southern one is still to be seen a vivacious figure in relief, considerably larger than life.

Of the three similar temples at Polonnaruwa, Thuparama, and Demala, this is the largest.

Just opposite the entrance is a particularly attractive little pavilion, or *Mandapaya*, in the shape of a raised platform adorned with many pillars. "It stands for one of the most perfect pieces of open lithic structure, extant in Ceylon, so far as regards moulded stereobate and surface-carved columns."

North of Jetawanarama and close to it is Kiri dagaba, the sister dagaba to Rankot, though much smaller, indeed about half the size in circumference. Kiri means milk-white and the name was given because at one time the whole surface was covered with chunam, which gleamed like marble. Kiri dagaba follows the same lines as Rankot, having altars at the four cardinal points and being surmounted by the same kind of superstructure, though in this case the pinnacle is truncated, being broken at the top. A path trending north and a little west from Kiri dagaba leads to one of the most remarkable sights in Polonnaruwa. This is the *Gal-vihara*, with its rock-cut statues, famous throughout the Buddhist world.

"This rock-hewn shrine, strictly, *Kalugal Vihara* or the Black Rock (granite) temple, stands unrivalled as *in its special features* the most impressive antiquity *par excellence* to be seen in the island of Ceylon, and possibly not rivalled throughout the continent of India." (1907 *Report.*)

We come suddenly out in full face of these dark silent figures, so still and yet so strong in their forceful impression, that they tend to startle by the repressed vitality they contain. A gently sloping bulge or outcrop of rock, similar to that from which they are hewn, rises opposite to them; mounting this we have an extended view. There is the colossal figure of Buddha himself, lying prone, the smaller but upright figure of Ananda his disciple at his head, and further to the left, beneath the overhanging roof of its rock-cut shrine, the seated figure of Buddha on a pedestal or throne. It is the two first that compel attention and impress no less by their solemnity than their size. The prostrate Buddha measures over 44 feet. This is large for Ceylon, but a mere nothing compared with the gigantic figures of Burma, the largest of which attain to over 100 feet. The wonder is rather why the Cingalese should have so rarely made a statue of Buddha in this attitude, and have contented themselves within such narrow limits. Possibly questions of cost had something to do with it.

Sir George Scott says:[1]

"The popular division of the gautamas is into the classes of standing, sitting and lying. This is somewhat crude, but it is perpetuated by a curious notion that though a man may present all three kinds of images, he must do so in a special order; the standing first, then the sitting and last the lying down."

His remarks of course refer to the custom in

[1] *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, by Shway Yoe. (Macmillan, 1896.)

Burma, but the Buddhism of Ceylon is the Buddhism of Burma with small local differences. Like all the prone statues, this one represents Buddha when he had attained Nirvana, and it follows the conventional rules for such work. Buddha lies on his right side, and his head is raised on a cushion, and rests on the right hand. The left arm is extended full length along the top of the body. The countenance is calm but inexpressive.

The Nirvana of the Buddhists can be expressed in words with difficulty; it seems to have been nothing else but a final loss of individuality, which, as has been already stated, was, in Gautama's vision, the origin and source of pain. He himself had actually attained "Nirvana" when he received the vision, but preferred to remain on earth to pass on the revelation to those who would hear. The favourite simile of this state is the slipping back of the drop of water into the ocean from which it came, for though Buddhists deny a soul, Nirvana is not death. Their belief is so much mingled with other creeds, and contained even from its foundation so much which belonged originally to Hinduism, that it need scarcely surprise us to find that with this grand, if somewhat cold, view of the final goal, most Buddhists cherish also ideas of heaven and hell, and countless Buddhist boys and girls stand pierced with a kind of delightful horror beneath the extraordinarily gruesome and materialistic paintings of "tortures of the damned" in the verandah at Kandy temple. We have seen too that the Buddhist cosmogony allows for heavens and hells in any number that might be wanted (see p. 121).

Yet standing here in front of this calm, still figure these notions slip away and the pure idea of a dreamless sleep is perforce predominant in the mind of the gazer. We recall Ananda's anguished cry: "The Lord is dead!" and the reassurance of another disciple standing by: "He is not dead, he has reached the stage of complete unconsciousness."

Separated from the Buddha by only a few feet, reared against the rock from which he was hewn, is the beloved disciple Ananda, who was to the master what St. John was to our Saviour. In the seventy-eighth chapter of the Mahawansa we read that Parakrama "caused cunning workmen to make three caves in the rock—namely, the cave of the spirits of knowledge, the cave of the sitting image, and the cave of the sleeping image," but no mention is made of the upright statue, which was, when first rediscovered, supposed to be that of Buddha himself. The lying Buddha is certainly not in a "cave," but the pillars still standing show that he and Ananda were both once enclosed in shrines, and they were covered with gaudy paint in the same manner as other cave-images. Greatly do they gain by having had the meaningless partition which once separated them broken down, and by being exposed to the free canopy of heaven, and still more by being left in all the dignity of the bare stone. The massive figures explain themselves. Ananda, who stands twenty-three feet high, is in an attitude of profound sorrow. His woebegone face, stained and streaked as it is by the monsoon rains, expresses this as clearly as cunning craftsmanship can do it; the



A BALUSTRADE AT POLONNARUWA. p. 230



THE FLORAL ALTAR. p. 214



ANANDA SORROWING FOR THE BUDDHA WHO HAS PASSED INTO NIRVANA.

features are drawn with grief, and the eyes half closed. The crossed arms denote the deferential attitude of a disciple, and the figure, a little "hunched" or swung to one side, with the left shoulder higher than the other, speaks dejection in every line. Human emotion of a poignant kind has been wrought into stone.

Lieut. Fagan, the first European who rediscovered these ruins, burst through the jungle in 1820, and with a shock found this upstanding colossal figure regarding him from the surrounding foliage. "I cannot describe what I felt at the moment," he wrote afterwards.

Not less impressive was the sight to me when, breaking out into the open in the dewy morning, nearly one hundred years later, I first saw the fashioned stone full of tense suggestiveness. A low wave of sound greeted my ears, rising and falling like a litany, and drawing near I saw a row of white-clad figures ranged in line before the prostrate image, chanting their invocations. At the head of the line was a handsome grey-bearded man swinging a brass pot, next to him his son, a fine stripling, and then came the women-folk, a singularly good-looking, middle-aged woman, a wizen shaven-headed nun, and two little girls of about eight and nine with long black tresses flowing loose down their backs. The patriarch from time to time advanced a few steps, and with a dexterous swing of his *lota*, or brass pot, poured water in a stream over the head and face of Buddha. That Ananda's feet had been similarly anointed the wet stains showed. For untold generations the carved stone has resisted the

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sluicing of the monsoon rains, and the oblation can in no way injure it. In low tones, so as not to disturb the religious ceremony, my guide, himself a Buddhist, explained that these people were pilgrims; they lived in Colombo, and had gone by rail to Anuradhapura, and thence walked the sixty-five miles in order to visit the sacred shrines of Polonnaruwa. They will not travel in a bullock-cart, for it would be loss of merit so to use animal labour; they had even refused his own offer to send their bundles back by cart; they would spare themselves no whit of the toil. The Gal Vihara is frequently visited by such pilgrims, but the majority come in April or May, and many wealthy people use their own cars, thus solving the problem of transit to the satisfaction of their consciences.

This family used no such subterfuges. As they turned away, having completed their service, I met them, and was struck by the dignified bearing and fine face of the leader, who might have stood for the reincarnation of some Druid priest. Having made their simple breakfast in the cave shrine, they passed on to other sacred places in the city, and slept that night in the open, by which they must have acquired abundant "merit," for the weather was uncertain, and it rained all night. Yet when I saw them again next morning, as they were just starting on their sixty-five-mile walk, they were as clean and neat as on the preceding day.

Between the figure of Ananda and the cave-shrine is a large sloping piece of rock, smoothed and inscribed in order that the duties of monks

and the rules prescribed for their conduct might be fully set forth. The present little cave-shrine is only a remnant of what once was a large monastery, the ruins of which may be traced far to the front. In the corners of the shrine a little of the old fresco painting can still be seen preserved by wire-netting. The central figure is itself enclosed in a sort of "meat-safe" of similar netting to save it from the well-meant but destructive attentions of pilgrims, who like to attach their little wax candles to it by their own grease. Something of the "meat-safe" resemblance must have been on the mind of the American visitor, who observed on seeing it, "I've read a good deal about the fierceness of your mosquitoes in this country, but that beats all I imagined. If you have to protect your stone images against them with wire curtains, they must be the very dickens!"

The Buddha is backed and surrounded by carvings of figures of singular richness, and it is not difficult to believe this was intended to represent "the cave of the spirits of knowledge." The further sedent Buddha on the rock westward does not usually impress visitors as being very interesting, but it is well worth while to examine the carving around it. It rests in a recess of the rock from which it has been cut, so that the rock-face projects like a screen on each side, somewhat after the manner of the rock-cut figures at Abu-Simbel, Egypt, though of course on a tiny scale in comparison. The Egyptians allowed their grand figures to face full daylight, open to the infinite canopy of heaven, while these figures of Ceylon, now uncovered, were once shut in by shrines,

which must have much detracted from their dignity. The image is in the style common in Ceylon, with the hands within one another on the lap, palms upward. The throne, or pedestal, is carved. The figure itself is about fifteen feet high, and the features are rather unlike most of the Buddha images in expression, being more harsh and severe than those usually represented.

CHAPTER XVII

A FLOWER IN STONE

It was only a comparatively few years ago that a member of the Archæological Society, working in the jungle, came upon a number of curved hewn stones. Investigation showed others buried in soil and débris, and when they were uncovered the most curious and perfect bath was revealed. It was formed of rings of curved stone, one within the other, descending to the bath in the centre. Among the meritorious works of Parakrama the Great it is mentioned in the Mahawansa that he made many baths for the monks " so that they might bathe themselves freely in water during the time of great drought." Among these was the Lotus Bath. There can be little doubt that this newly discovered specimen was of the " lotus-bath " pattern, and once more the truth and accuracy of the chronicles was proved. It is not easy to get at this curious architectural feat, for it lies in the jungle four miles from the rest-house, and eight miles' walking is not to be lightly undertaken in that climate. Moreover, the greater part of the way is over paths, or tracks, not easy to find, and not even a bullock-cart is procurable in this back-of-beyond.

I had determined not to leave Polonnaruwa

without seeing the Lotus Bath, and if possible getting a photograph of it, for it is hardly ever seen reproduced. Luck was against me. The October monsoon had not fulfilled expectations, and at the break of the year was making up for it. Persistent importunity procured a walking bullock-cart from somewhere, and it was to be ready at 6 a.m. on the last morning of my stay. All that night the rain came down in waterspouts, nor did it cease with daylight; it poured down in solid chunks till midday. Then it paused sullenly, as if ready to start again at any moment, and though midday is not the hour one would select for an expedition in Ceylon, I determined to seize the chance, as the greyness of the day made it feasible.

The carts of Ceylon are on a different model from those of India. The palm-leaf thatch, which covers the tilt, extends outwards at an angle back and front, so as to form a very effective screen over the driver's head and the interior of the cart. It renders it impossible, however, for any one sitting inside to see any view except directly backwards and forwards. A mattress had been put in the floor of the cart for my accommodation, and on this I reclined as gracefully as circumstances permitted. It seemed to me the bullock required more physical energy on the part of the driver to make it move at all than would have sufficed to pull the cart.

We soon left the road and followed a path where the low boughs swept across the palm-leaf tilt with a noise like thunder, making speech impossible.

The native tracker stalked ahead, a magnificent figure of a man, with fine carriage and alert head, and bare brown shoulders gleaming with moisture. To complete the weird unreality of the whole thing he carried a gun under one arm and an umbrella under the other! The gun was a necessary precaution, for there are wild elephants in this district and it might be needful to scare them away.

There were pools of water lying in the squashy soil of the track, and the knotted roots of the innumerable species of *ficus* made humps and tendons, that it was a work of difficulty to surmount with the clumsy wheels, and the most reluctant bullock grew even more reluctant as his home was left further behind.

At length he came to a dead stop, and no persuasion sufficed to make him alter his mind. We had to get out and walk. The tracker led the way, and pointed with pride to the plentiful signs that a large herd of elephants must have passed very shortly before. After following the cut path for some way, he swerved aside on to a tiny foot-track wavering through the thickly growing bushes. Boughs switched in my face as I followed, and large spiders' webs made themselves felt unpleasantly. There was something mysterious in the air, as if we were bound to preserve complete silence in this descent or suffer some hideous penalty.

Quite suddenly, lying in a green basin, cut out of the solid jungle growth, I saw IT!

A wonder in stone, a flower petrified and preserved for immortality!

The rain had ceased, the sky was sullen, the

shadow of the surrounding vegetation fell heavily in the glen; but at that moment a pale gleam of sunlight glanced upon the stone like a phosphorescent finger, and brought out the warmth that lay in those shapely granite blocks. It is a strange feature of Cingalese stone-work that it always seems alive. The workmen had some curious power of vitalising that which their hands wrought. In contrast with the awesome but stern dead temples and statues of Egypt, the temples and statues of Ceylon seem radiantly alive. And that unexpected pencil of light brought out this quality in the granite flower. The stone-work measures 24 feet 9 inches across the top, and drops to a depth of 4 feet 6 inches, in diminishing rings, each forming a step, until it reaches the heart—the bath proper—5 feet 4 inches across. At the time I saw it this was filled with weed.

In that confined space it is difficult to get a photograph, and, owing to the dip in the middle of the bath, one should be above and a little away from it. The trees around, luckily, afforded foothold, and by the aid of one of them the desire of my heart was achieved (see p. 240).

Mr. Bell says:

"The artistic conception of this beautiful bath is worthy of all praise. Imagine a gigantic lotus-flower of granite, full-blown, 24 feet 9 inches in diameter, with five concentric lamina of eight petals, gradually diminishing to a stamen. Then decide to reverse nature's order, and instead of a convex shape depress the petal rings into a concavity. . . and we have the granite bath as it exists in all its shapeliness to this day." (1909 *Report.*)

POLONNARUWA

By permission of the Ceylon Archaeological Survey.

N

TOPA VEWA

CITY

CITADEL CITY

CITY

Kumāra Pokuna

Ronkot Vehera

Pohayawala



Personally I cannot see it as a lotus, though no doubt it is the nearest that could be made to such a flower. To me it appears exactly like a "Tudor rose" in stone.

The Lotus Bath is not at the extreme end of the discoveries in this direction. Returning from the dell where it lies, we penetrated farther northward along the made path. A strong warm smell, unmistakably "wild beast," set us sniffing until the tiny hoof-marks of some deer showed up in the soft mud of the footway and explained it. They had passed that way between our coming and going, not five minutes' interval.

Soon we came out into a raw new clearing decorated by stubs of destroyed trees. At the south end is a circular brick building with trees clutching at the life of it. This is another Watedagé, and is a fine object lesson in the work to be overcome by the Survey authorities. Not so very unlike this must the glorious recovered Watedagé near Thuparama have looked before restoration!

At the far end of the clearing stands *Demala-maha-seya,* built on the same plan as Jetawanarama and Thuparama. There is something impressive in the fact of these three great temples standing at equal distances in a north and south line, and a study of their similarities and differences would be instructive. Demala is larger than the last named, being more nearly the size of Jetawanarama, which it resembles also in its interior arrangements. The entrance is very perfect and almost the same in construction. Inside, at the west end of the shrine, is also a huge

upright statue of Buddha. When undamaged this must have been forty-one feet high. The top of the head was at some time wantonly broken, the rest fell in a monsoon rain, and one crystal eye was found, minus its pupil, in the rubbish below. But the chief glory of Demala once lay in its fresco paintings, with which the walls were literally covered. "All else was—by the latest architect —subordinated to providing the fullest wall-space for the display of paintings intended to cover every inch of surface, perhaps to the very soffit of the vaulted roof." In 1885 Mr. Burrows unearthed the vestibule and found some of these paintings. Those farther inside were laid bare in 1909. These paintings represent stories from the Jataka tales of the Bodhisavata and legends of Buddha's temple in Ceylon:

"Never was a greater wealth of exquisitely painted scenes from the Buddhist legend ever presented than at this mediæval viharé of Polonnaruwa . . . here set down in coloured fresco with a naturalness, spirit and technique that tell the story with unerring fidelity. There are paintings still left at Demala-maha-seya which rival some of the best in the cave temples at Ajanta!" (1909 *Report.*)

The general tints, as is usual, are orange and red, but here and there these are supplemented by a pale greenish-blue, which tint is used, as at Sigiriya, to represent darker people, such as attendants. The Cingalese, like the Burmese, judging from their paintings, picture themselves

as a light-skinned race, though not with so much reason.

Of all the stories, that of the hare (the coming Buddha in that form) is probably most familiar to Europeans. The hare having nought else to give to the hungry wayfarer, offered her own body, and to glorify the feat the figure of the hare "appears in the moon's disc in the sky as a reflected image shines in a silver mirror." The representation of this tale is on the south wall.

A full account of the frescoes, with the stories they tell, is to be found in the 1909 *Report*.

This temple is not mentioned in the Mahawansa. Experts think that the original construction may be assigned to Wijaya Bahu I (A.D. 1065), grandfather of Parakrama I, but this is merely judging from the style of ornamentation of the outer walls. These are as rich in ornament as those of Jetawanarama, and contrast with the comparative simplicity of Thuparama. Though of Hindu design, the temple was Buddhist, as is shown by the statue and fresco decoration.

Not very far to the south of the Lotus Bath, and east of the path, is a huge, shapeless mass, once a dagaba; this is called to-day *Unagala Vehera*, but Mr. Bell says that this is the true Demala-maha-seya, the largest dagaba of all, "1,300 cubits round about," a Ceylon builder's cubit being equal to 2 feet. This dagaba was built by Parakrama; the name Damilo corrupted to Demala embodies the fact that Tamils who had been taken prisoners were employed upon its construction.

These three great fanes, Thuparama, Jetawan-

arama, and Demala, though Hindu in architecture, are thus Buddhist shrines, but there are numerous smaller temples at Polonnaruwa which are Hindu both in architecture and reality. Of these we have already seen Siva Devalé Nos. 1 and 2. But away out on a promontory projecting into Topa Wewa, not far from the main road, are many others, more or less in a state of ruin. They lie between the groups containing Jetawanarama and Thuparama, and, being so accessible, can be visited any time. Some of them are erected to the honour of Vishnu, and stand side by side with those to Siva. A full account of these small temples and the work done on them will be found in the 1908 *Report*.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BEAUTY OF THE BUND

WHATEVER penalty there may be to suffer in the way of heat, it is certain that sometimes those who sit in the rest-house verandah at Polonnaruwa must condone the sins of the P.W.D., for the view is worth much suffering. The length of the silver-blue lake stretches out toward the central hills, sometimes cobalt in colouring, but in uncertain weather deep indigo and smoke-grey. On one side the flat green pastures show up the feeding herds, and on the other the thick jungle growth is the home of innumerable happy wild creatures. Between the verandah and the water the ground breaks away sharply, dropping to broken rocks and a tangle of huge stones and bushes. The interval is the theatre for a surprising amount of life. There are small chaffinch-like birds with crested heads, who live in the eaves, and when they fly expand their tails into white fans, while an unexpected flash of red springs out from under their wings. In the fine whip-like bushes on the very edge of the verandah are tiny little birds, no bigger than wrens, but with fine pointed heads and long beaks, so delicately made they look as if they would easily slip through a finger-ring. They are not nearly so large as the

great velvet-winged butterflies, black, white, and red, with huge bodies, which are seen in myriads, or the still larger and much less common fellow, pure black and white, with an undulating flight easily to be mistaken for a bird. The long-tailed fly-catcher, or "Bird of Paradise," of the terra-cotta variety, is fairly common, and his hue is matched almost exactly in the under-wing of a grass-green bird about the size of a starling, which appears in flocks. To relieve the greens and reds there are numbers of the kingfisher and the laughing jackass species, showing marvellous hues of iridescent blue. So tiny are some of the king-fishers, that the sparkling speck of blue appearing and disappearing seems an illusion, while others are large with orange waistcoats. Looking down sternly on this revel of the fairies may be a hawk or kite, with sober brown coat and white shirt-front, as rigid as the dead bough on which he sits, with only his brilliant staring eyes ever turning like wheels in his motionless head as he glances this way and that. But these are only a few species that strike the eye of the least observant; doubt-less many other varieties could be added by any one accustomed to watch bird-life, and having some knowledge of the ornithology of Ceylon.

Staring idly at the kaleidoscopic changes of colour one day, I caught sight of something like big lizards chasing each other over the bare rocks near the water, just about the place which the population of Polonnaruwa chooses for its Sunday afternoon ablutions. "Baby crocs!" said an inhabitant beside me. "The tank swarms with the brutes. No, they're not big enough to be really

dangerous, but you will notice the natives do their bathing on shore!"

From the rest-house southward along the bund of the tank the way leads to the remaining sights of Polonnaruwa. It is a fascinating walk, made joyous by the hum and chatter of the happy wild things who live by the way. The old circuit-house is passed, covered with a mass of pink antigonon, showing up against the dark striped orange and maroon leaves of the crotons, growing the size of trees beside it. In the narrow track it is necessary to step carefully in order not to stumble over the dull-coloured tortoises, as large as footballs, that are feeding in the grass. Sometimes, but not frequently, a perfect little specimen of a marked tortoise, his quaint shell a beautiful and intricate pattern of gamboge and sepia, may be noticed.

The boughs of the large trees ahead are convulsed at our approach, and an avalanche of monkeys, who have been feeding on the thickly growing yellow seeds of a large banyan, precipitate themselves one by one across an aerial gulf, landing in a mass of swaying twigs. They live in a Paradise of long, swinging lianas and twisted, natural ropes and abundant food and good company, unharmed by man. In some of the far outlying districts monkeys are eaten still, but only by people who are very poor. Mr. Perera reports one of such monkey-eating tribes at Ataragallewa in a miserable condition; he came across them in the course of circuit exploration in 1912, and describes them as "haggardly-looking creatures."

In the days of the city's prime there were buildings even in the area of Topa Wewa itself. Some of these have been excavated. One of them was a dagaba which had been rifled by the Tamils, who, as usual, had done their work thoroughly. A part of a brick *Yantra-gala* was discovered; this was one of the twenty-five hole variety, and some of its compartments contained antiques in bronze in the form of gods and animals. Beneath, further investigation revealed a copper coin (date *circ.* A.D. 1200) and a few other trifles. The most important find, however, was a dwarf obelisk, 1 foot 8 inches in full height, with seven projecting horizontal ribs on its sides. It was painted in colour, and was surmounted by a small dagaba of thin beaten gold, made hollow. This was obviously a relic-casket, for it contained a gold coin and seventeen gems. There were various other small finds, such as bronze gods, cobras, insignia, and utensils, but all intrinsically of little value.

Other dagabas and viharas have been excavated in the bed of the lake; one mound disclosed a building which may probably have been a royal palace, for it was evident there were several such subsidiary residences, occupied according to the changes of the seasons.

After about a mile the bund crosses the ancient spill-water of the lake, which now might almost be mistaken for natural rock, so broken and tumbled are the mighty blocks of stone.

A little way further the path bifurcates, the straight branch going on to the next village, and that on the left turning away from the lake. A



THE LOTUS BATH.

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Ceylon Archæological Survey Photo.

ROCK-CUT FIGURE, POPULARLY CALLED "PARAKRAMA THE GREAT."

notice board announces in Cingalese, for the benefit of pilgrims, that this is the way to the Potgul Monastery.

Up and down goes the track, giving a glimpse of lovely glades, before it leads to an open space with a huge mass of rock on the left. Turning sharply, we come face to face with a tall and imposing rock-cut statue quite unlike anything else yet seen. This is commonly called the Statue of Parakrama, but without reason, for though of his date, obvious evidence proclaims it not to be a king, but a "holy man." The figure is 11 feet 6 inches in height, and looks much taller than this, as it is cut clear out of the rock-face, with no roof to dwarf it.

Mr. Bell says :

"Of neither King, nor Buddhist abbot is the rock-cut figure, the lithic representation. Clearly it is the presentment in granite, perhaps exactly twice life-size, of some once famous Hindu *guru*. Clad only in a loin cloth and tall head-dress, bare-bodied, save for the *upavita* or Brahmin cord, wearing no ornaments, heavy in build and features, with beard long and grizzled, the statue possesses no single trait of that divinity which doth hedge a King. Moreover the palm-leaf roll of the *veda* held in both hands as though being studied, and the whole appearance and pose of the figure, stamp it unmistakably as a rock-hewn portrait of a revered religious teacher from the Indian continent." He adds in a note : "Perhaps the statue represents that 'Kapila the ascetic' for whom Parakrama Bahu built an eagle-shaped building adorned with divers works of art, and ornamented with peaks and the like." (1906 *Report.*)

He says also:

"As a silhouette the elderly *guru* is seen not to hold himself fully erect, and to have developed the common tendency to obesity due to creeping old age. A true touch of naturalism is further quaintly brought out by the paunch being made to protrude beyond the tightly tied loin-cloth and belt."

The curious fez-like cap rises above the rest of the rock, being cut out of a little boss or hummock which has been thus utilised. The long drooping moustache, full lips, and rather heavy dignified expression give the figure great character. It is obviously a portrait in stone and not merely a conventional type. It is human all through.

The statue is not mentioned by either Major Forbes or Sir E. Tennent.

On its left is a dagaba, from the summit of which a wide view of the rolling miles of jungle can be seen, and if a visit be made at sunset when the red light illumines the trees, and the weird cries of the myriad creatures, who have their being therein, begin to make themselves heard, it is a most impressive experience.

Straight ahead of the statue, at a distance of about 200 yards, is the *Potgul Vehera,* placed directly in the line of vision. Through the centuries the *guru* has stared fixedly at the library, from which possibly he borrowed the sacred book he is represented as holding.

The most interesting feature of this building is its circular room, reaching 20 feet 6 inches at its widest, and showing traces of decorative paint.

It was not until 1904 that the jungle was cut down and these buildings were uncovered, though their existence had been known some time before. The wall of the circular building is so extraordinarily thick, nearly 15 feet at the ground, that it obviously must have been designed to support some great weight such as a dome. The building was completely gutted and ransacked in search of treasures in the form of sacred books some time in the eighties. There was a tradition that it contained valuable writings, and this probably led to its name, which means "Library Dagaba." Its real name is unknown.

"If we may hope to identify the so-called 'Potgul-Vehera' from the *Mahawansa* record, it may not improbably have been that 'delightful circular house,' which, as the chronicle relates, Parakrama Bahu the Great (A.D. 1164–1197) had constructed 'wherein he might listen to the Jatakas of the Great Sage, read by the learned priest who dwelt there.'"

From an inscribed door-jamb of the *mandapaya* the following inscription has been recovered and translated:

"That most masterful and sapient King of Lanka [Parakrama Bahu] purified the law of the Omniscient [Buddha]. It was he who first caused the entire viharé to be built. The Queen of that wise King Parakrama Bahu, having been installed in the kingdom, caused the viharé to be wholly rebuilt. This *Mandapaya* was caused to be erected by that noble queen, Chandravati by name, who had become secondly Chief Queen to the King." (1906 *Report.*)

Mr. Bell identifies this queen with "Rupavati," fairest of beings, who, like the Moon (*Chandralekha*), rose . . . and drew upon her the eyes of the world." Around the "Vehera" are four small dagabas and around the platform the ruins of monks' cells or *piriven*, symmetrically arranged. Mr. Bell discovers marked points of difference in the architecture of this monastery from others at Polunnaruwa. He points out points of similarity between it and Mi-Baume in Siamese Kambodia as described by Monsieur Tissandier, and adds that lithic records point to the "Kambodian quarter" of the old city probably lying to the south. This is the farthest building south yet discovered.

We have now traversed Polunnaruwa from end to end, from Demala-maha-seya to the Potgul vehera, and it is probably safe to say that nowhere within a similar small area are to be found so many buildings showing such striking originality in their architectural treatment. From the graceful Floral Altar to the ruined bathing-house on the promontory, each has its story to tell, and tells it in a way which may prove interesting to others than those who are fortunate enough to visit these royal cities so long lost in the jungle.

CHAPTER XIX

YAPAHUWA: A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY FORTRESS

Though Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa are by far the grandest of the ancient Cingalese cities, the one having been the capital for about twelve centuries and the other for half a dozen, there are yet many other ruins scattered over the Central Provinces which would prove a fascinating study to those who have time to visit them. Chief of these is Yapahuwa, which was the capital for a short time in the thirteenth century. It is most easily reached from Anuradhapura, for the nearest station is Maho, on the line to and from Polgahawela Junction. From the train, in passing, can be noted a great rock, not unlike Sigiriya, standing up abruptly to the east, about three miles away. There is no rest-house at the station, and if a conveyance is needed, a bullock-cart must be ordered in advance. By road it is forty-four miles from Anuradhapura: forty-one to Maho, and three beyond. The first reference to this fortress retreat in the Mahawansa is in the thirteenth century, when a city was built "on the top of Subhapabbata [1] [Yapahu-Kanda], a mountain difficult of access to the enemy."

[1] "The names Subha-pabbata, Subha-chala, Subha-giri, Yahapav (by Metathesis Yapav), Yapahuwa, all mean 'the excellent mountain.'"

This was rendered necessary by the repeated inroads of the Southern Indians, mainly Pandyans, and the place became a stronghold to which the Cingalese could retreat in times of stress.

> "Afterwards he [Wijaya Bahu IV] enclosed that city also with a high wall and a moat, and built there and finished a palace of exceeding great beauty, and made provision for the support of the great priesthood that dwelt in that city."

In the reign of Wijaya's successor, Bhuwaneka Bahu (A.D. 1277), after some uncertainty, Yapahuwa definitely became the capital of the kingdom. The king reigned here for eleven years. After his death misfortunes fell thick and fast on the weaker race: there was a disastrous famine, and further fierce invasions of the Pandyans from India, when the Cingalese were more than ever unable to cope with them. The stronghold itself was stormed and taken, and the Tooth-relic carried off to India, whence it was recovered later by Parakrama Bahu III (A.D. 1288).

Yapahuwa never regained its position after this smashing blow, so its duration of importance was less than twenty years. But it was finally ruined, so far as architectural buildings go, by a visit from the Portuguese in the sixteenth century.

In 1886 it was repaired to some extent by Mr. A. E. Williams, Assistant Engineer in the Public Works Department.

The rock, which resembles Sigiriya in a general way, but differs from it in important particulars, is partly enclosed by a double ramp or bund

surrounding a space at the foot. Within this three flights of stairs mount to three terraces, one above the other. On the topmost of these is the entrance porch to what is supposed to have been the royal palace.

Mr. Williams repaired the highest, or third staircase, which is by far the most elaborately ornamented. He reset the stones, raised and replaced the grotesque stone lions which had fallen and were broken. He did some repairs to the palace entrance, but could do little more for want of time or of funds.

It was not until 1910–11 that the Survey authorities were able to take up the work. The first object was to clear out the jungle growth to the east of the rock on ground-level. The remains here were of little importance, with the exception of the *Dalada Maligawa*, theTooth Temple designed to receive that sacred relic when brought here by King Bhuwaneka Bahu. It may be noted that this Tooth Relic was an adjunct of supreme power, and when the king moved his seat of authority, it went with him. The loss of it entailed great diminution of prestige. The style of this temple is Hindu, and it is made of granite. There is not much to remark upon beyond the *torana*, or canopy of a door, carved handsomely from a single stone and enclosing an image of the seated Buddha in high relief. This still remains, but is on the ground.

The chief sights of Yapahuwa are not to be found here, but in the fine stairs and the palace porch on the cliff-side. The first of these stairways within the ramp consists of twenty-three

steps broken by a landing. It leads to a broad terrace from which springs a second flight. This lay in ruins until 1911, when it was taken in hand by the Survey and rebuilt for the convenience of visitors, who had previously had to struggle over a heap of sliding stone to gain the upper buildings.

Almost immediately above it the third stairway of thirty-five steps, the one repaired first by Mr. Williams, continues the ascent. Here again the steps are broken by an intermediate landing. Of the rich, flamboyant carving it is possible to give an idea only by detail. Out of all the quaint semi-mythical beasts the "Ceylon" lions stand out boldly, and "despite their weird conventionality, the attitude of the enraged animals, half-rising for attack, is admirably expressed."

Mr. Bell says, however:

"The sculptures which delight the eye and instinctively command special need of admiration for their marvellous symmetry and grace, are not the boldly executed animal warders of the staircase (lions, etc.) which add much to the general splendour of the whole scheme, but the more delicate efforts of the stone-masons as displayed in the chaste conception and artistic finish of the carved members of the Porch—the spirited frieze, or dado, of its vestibule's stereobate, the windows in its façade, with their elaborately embellished pediments, and, finally, the rich complex columns which sustained the roof." (1910–11 *Report.*)

There is an account of all this in *Once a Week*, 1864, by a Mr. J. Bailey of the C.C.S., who had visited it in the midst of the jungle when all un-

tended and unnoticed, but this account, though correct enough in its description of things actually seen, is not to be relied upon in matters of history or deduction. One of the features of the carving is a dado of dancers and musicians with very spirited figures—"a veritable cinematograph in granite of the most vivid and entrancing character."

To describe the staircase in untechnical language, it consists of two flights one above the other, broken by a small landing, and flanked by heavy walls, or wings, not in the least like anything to which Western eyes are accustomed. These walls rise in a series of vertical panels facing downwards. The panels are capped by canopies which thus rise one above the other, giving an effect of extraordinary richness. The lowest of all is divided into two storeys, or two panels, the uppermost of which is the smaller, and is decorated by a gracefully carved figure of a female, holding a bowl of flowers, a very curious change from the ordinary guard-stone, unless, indeed, we are to accept as its representative the tiny fat dwarf on the ground on each side at the very foot of the stairs. There are other decorative figures to be noticed higher up, and about half way, resting on one of the facing walls, are the boldly sculptured lions with their grinning faces turned a little inward toward each other.

The whole staircase, with the broken effect of the "stepped" walls or vertical panels, whichever we like to call them, the delicately carved figures, the grimacing lions, forms an extraordinary jumble of rich detail.

At the top is the splendid arch leading to the

palace precincts flanked by two stone windows under heavily carved *toranas*. These two windows were once filled with pierced stone-work of a most curious kind. When Mr. Bailey visited the place, one, the western, was still here, but the eastern was broken to pieces, except for a few scraps. The perfect window has since been removed to the Colombo Museum. It seems a pity that it cannot be replaced. It is one huge slab of stone, 7 inches thick and 4 feet 7 inches by 3 feet 3 inches in size. It is cut into forty-five rings, or circles, and in each circle is a figure either human or animal, with that individual difference which is such a charm in artistic work. From the row of sacred geese in the top row to the large paunched dwarfs at the bottom row the work is perfect and complete. For this alone Yapahuwa should be remembered.

Once through the porch, which is finely built and proportioned, we face desolation. High on one side rises the bare cliff face, in front is a tangled mass of stones and shrubs. There is nothing left which can conjure up the palace once standing here, except its magnificently planned approach. In fact, the palace was never completed. The time of Bhuwaneka's troubled rule was not long enough. His conception was certainly royal, if we may judge from what was done, but by the time the staircases and façade had been made, gloom and famine had descended on the land; neither funds nor labour permitted of its being continued.

It is possible to continue to the summit of the rock by a rough track, helped out by a few steps here and there, but there is little more to see. A

few caves, a few stone ruins, a pokuna about half an acre in extent, these alone remain to tell of the presence of bygone life.

The vision we carry away from Yapahuwa is of an unfulfilled conception. If only the Pandyans had stayed at home another twenty years we might have had a specimen of a fourteenth-century palace of unrivalled splendour standing on its isolated terrace beneath the steep rock.

So far as concerns the object with which this book is written the tale is done. We have traced the capitals of the kings of Ceylon from their earliest foundation in the sacred city of Anuradhapura, through the brief interlude of Sigiri, and on to the scarcely less interesting city of Polonnaruwa. We have seen the attempt made to retrieve the glory of the kings by these buildings on Yapahuwa and its frustration. Of the other seats of royalty — they can hardly be called capitals—where the dispossessed kings ruled from time to time until they could recover their ground, there is little to see. These range from Dambadeniya in the thirteenth century, Kurunegala in the fourteenth, Gampola also fourteenth, Cotta in the fifteenth. Then we come to Kandy, which was the capital from 1592–1798. But Kandy has been written about in a score of guide-books, and of it there is nothing new to tell.

Earlier even than Anuradhapura is the very ancient capital Magama (Tissamaharama), but this is in the extreme south of the island. It is visited by pilgrims, but not many Europeans will go so far out of the beaten track. Those who wish for " more," had better rather go afield to such

places as Nalanda, half-way between Matalé and Dambulla, which, though never a capital, was the headquarters of Parakrama the Great when he made war on his uncle, King Gaja Bahu, in Polonnaruwa. Here the mighty warrior built a fortress, and here there is a ruined shrine called Gedi-gé, dating from the eleventh century, which possesses some features of interest and is described in the 1910–11 *Report*. Or to Medigiriya, with its Wata-dagé adorned with many pillars and a "Buddhist-railing" wall, and nine Buddhas of different sizes.

Even then the chance visitor to Ceylon will have gained but a very small idea of the vast number of ruins scattered over the northern part of the island, and of the incredible patience and pertinacity of the Survey Authorities in hunting them out, unearthing them, and making them accessible. The circuit sections of the reports hardly mention the days of soaking rain, the nights spent in leaking huts, the difficulties of crossing unbridged rivers and tearing or cutting through jungle thorns, to say nothing of plagues of insects, chances of fever, and dangers from wild animals, but to those who know Ceylon these are "taken as read." Of the work accomplished, the innumerable inscriptions unearthed and deciphered, the splendid carvings saved and replaced, the contribution to and illustration of the ancient history of the island, no praise can be too high. Thus, and only thus, have we been enabled to visit these old Cingalese sovereigns in their royalty, to see visions of the fair towns with broad streets, of the images of silver and gold, of

the brick and granite palaces in their prosperity, to gain ideas of their constant fighting and strange methods of warfare and provisioning their armies, of their personalities and characteristics from the days of Dutugemunu B.C. to the days of his great successor Parakrama, who, in many respects, resembled him in history and prowess, in the twelfth century A.D. With Parakrama the Cingalese reached their last high-water mark; from thence they waned, and the days of the Kandyan kings mark the low-water mark of depravity and cruelty so far as royalty was concerned.

TABLE OF DISTANCES

	Miles
Anuradhapura	
to Dambulla . .	44
to Kandy . . .	89
to Kurunegala . .	71
to Polonnaruwa (by direct road) .	65
(by Dambulla) .	80
to Sigiriya . .	52
to Yapahuwa . .	45
Colombo	
to Anuradhapura (by Kurunegala) .	129
(by Kegalle and Kandy) . .	161
to Kandy . . .	72
to Kurunegala . .	58
to Polgahawela . .	45
Dambulla	
to Anuradhapura .	44
to Kandy . . .	45
to Habarane . .	14
to Polonnaruwa . .	42
to Sigiriya . .	10
Habarane	
to Anuradhapura .	37
to Dambulla . .	14
to Kandy . . .	59
to Polonnaruwa . .	28
to Sigiriya . .	15
Kandy	
to Anuradhapura .	89
to Dambulla . .	45
to Habarane . .	59
to Matalé . . .	16
to Polonnaruwa . .	87
to Sigiriya . .	55
Matalé	
to Anuradhapura .	73
to Dambulla . .	29
to Habarane . .	43
to Kandy . . .	16
to Polonnaruwa . .	71
to Sigiriya . .	39
Polonnaruwa	
to Anuradhapura (by direct road) .	65
(by Dambulla) .	80
to Dambulla . .	42
to Habarane . .	28
to Kandy . . .	87
to Sigiriya . .	43
Sigiriya	
to Anuradhapura .	52
to Dambulla . .	10
to Habarane . .	15
to Kandy . . .	55
to main road . .	6
to Polonnaruwa . .	43

Note.—These distances are in many cases taken from the motor-tour prospectus of Messrs. Walker, Sons & Co., Ltd., Ceylon.

INDEX

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CEYLON

Miles

10 0 10 20 30 40

NORTHERN PROVINCE

NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE

NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

Jaffna

Elephant Pass

Mullaittivu

Mannaar

Vavuniya

Trincomalee

Anuradhapura

Puttalam

Chilaw

Negombo

Kurunegala

Matale

Kandy

Kegalla

Batticaloa

Ratnapura

Kalutara

Galle

Matara

Tangalla

Hambantotta

Pearl Banks

SOUTHERN

London John Murray



